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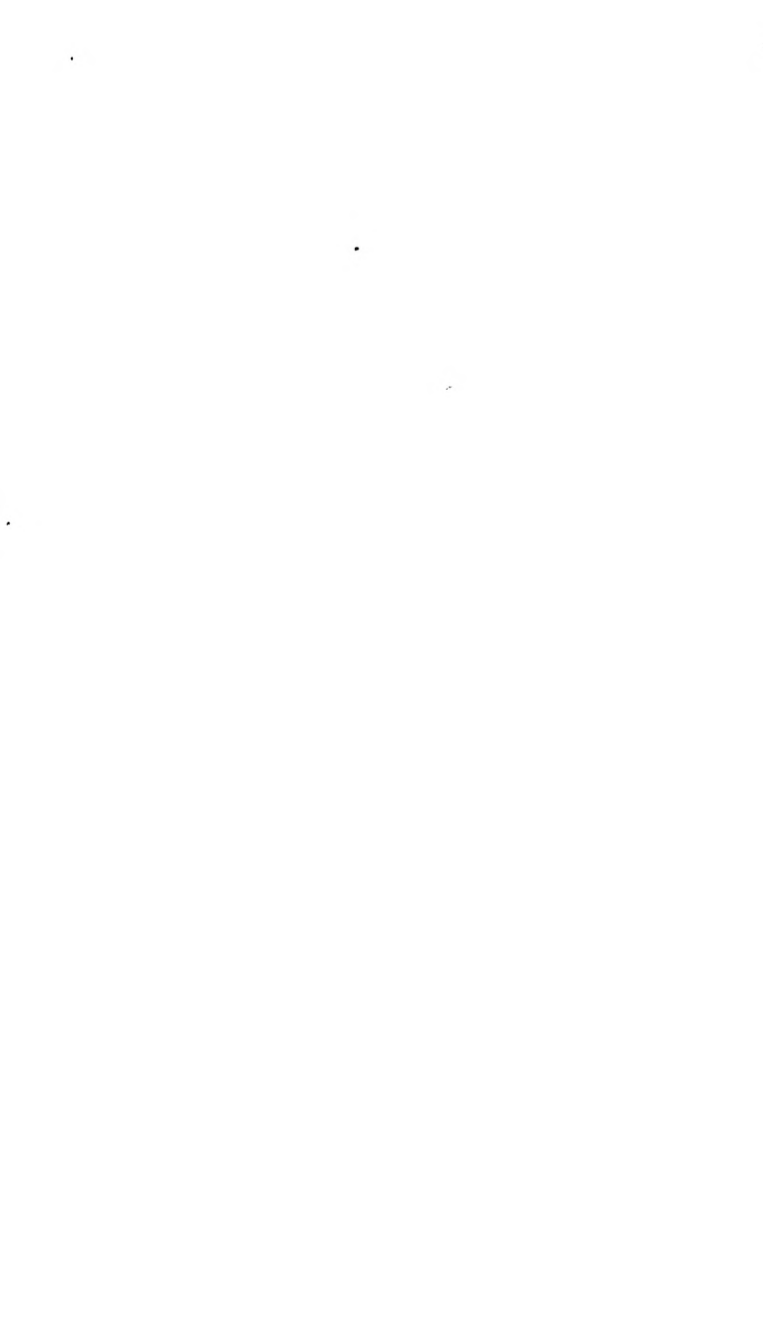




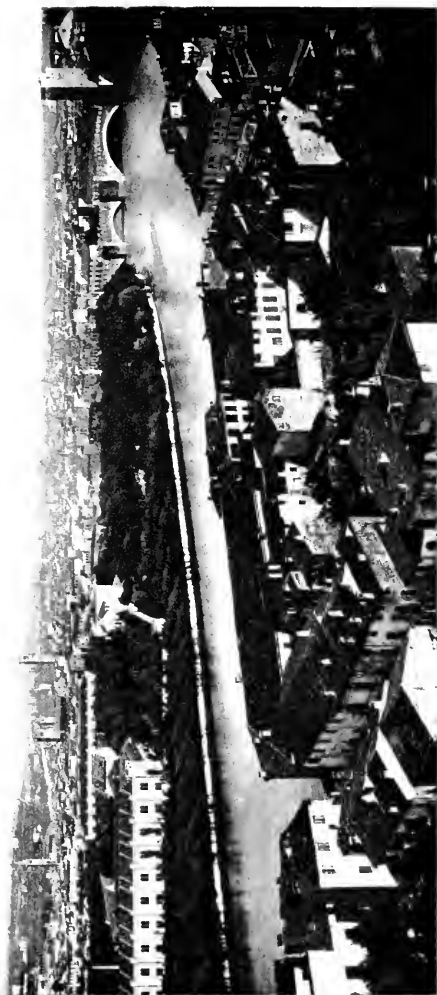


# JOURNEYS IN ITALY

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## **VERONA**

*View of the City from the Bell-Tower of San Zeno*



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# THÉOPHILE GAUTIER

TRANSLATED BY

DANIEL B. VERMILYE

*WITH TWENTY-SEVEN FULL-PAGE  
PHOTOGRAVURE ILLUSTRATIONS*

NEW YORK: BRENTANO'S

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THE UNIVERSITY PRESS, CAMBRIDGE, MASS., U. S. A.

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# JOURNEYS IN ITALY







## CHAPTER I

### GENEVA — PLEIN — PALAIS — A HERCULEAN ACROBAT.

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WE must begin by confessing that our first step upon foreign soil was accompanied by an act of paganism — a libation to the rising sun! Catholic Italy, which knows so well how to accommodate itself to the gods of Greece and Rome, will readily forgive us; but rigid Geneva will doubtless accuse us of being somewhat irreligious. A bottle of *Vin d'Arbois*, bought in passing through Poligny, a pretty village at the foot of the Jurassic wall which must be crossed in leaving France, was quaffed by us at break of day: *Phœbo nascenti*! This early morning ray suddenly revealed to us, at the base of the farthest mountain range, Lake Lemán, whose glossy and polished surface shone like a mirror beneath the silvery mists of the dawning day,

The road descends with many a sharp turn, each disclosing an ever fresh and ever charming vista.

The fog, as it cleared away, revealed to our gaze, as through a network of gauze, the distant summits of the Swiss Alps, and the lake, almost as large as a small sea, on which, like feathers of doves fallen from the nest, floated the white sails of a bevy of matutinal boats.

We pass Nyon, and already some significant details surprise us of the fact that we are no longer in France.

Small pieces of wood, cut in circular form, or fashioned like tiles, cover the houses, whose gables are tipped with balls of tin; the window-shutters and doors are made of boards placed horizontally instead of vertically, as is the custom in France; green, the color so dear to the hearts

of those enthusiastic tradesmen, the compatriots of Rousseau, is replaced by red; French Switzerland begins to make its appearance in the sign-boards, the names upon which already indicate a German or Italian derivation.

The road, as it advances, follows the shore of the lake, whose transparent wavelets die upon the pebbles of the beach with rhythmic regularity, and are occasionally augmented by the swell from some steamboat decked with the colors of the Swiss Confederation, bound for Villeneuve or Lausanne.

Looking out on the other side of the road we see the mountains we are about to descend, upon whose slopes the clouds are creeping like the smoke of shepherds' fires.

A number of *chars-à-bancs*, in which one sits back to back or shoulder to shoulder, plough deep furrows in the dust of the road and are drawn by diminutive horses or very large donkeys. Villas and cottages become more numerous, and their vases filled with flowers, their terraces and their walls of brick, are visible through the foliage of lofty trees. We realize that we are drawing near to a city of some importance.

The idea of Madame de Staël, with her big black eyebrows, her yellow turban and short waist in the fashion of the Empire, continually haunted us while passing through Coppet. Although fully aware that she had been dead a long while, we were always expecting to see her standing under the columned peristyle of some villa, with Schlegel and Benjamin Constant at her side; but she did not make her appearance. Ghosts do not willingly show themselves in broad daylight; they are too shy for that.

Suddenly the mist cleared away, and the crests of the mountains shone above the lake like silver gauze. Mont Blanc, cold and severe in its majesty, under its diadem of snow which no summer sun can melt, dominated the group.

Carriages, carts, and pedestrians become more numerous, and now we are only a few paces from Geneva.

A childish notion, which our many long journeys have failed to dissipate entirely, causes us always to imagine cities in figures made up of the product for which they are famous. Thus Brussels is a great square of cabbages; Ostend, a park of oysters; Strasburg, a *pâté de foie gras*; Nerac, a ragout; Nuremburg, a box of toys; and Geneva, a watch with four jeweled holes. We picture to ourselves a vast machinery of watch-making, toothed wheels, cylinders, escapements, springs, all going "tick-tack" and turning perpetually. We fancy the houses, if there are any, as being capped with gold and silver, and the doors as being locked with watch-keys. We imagine the outskirts of the city to be made of steel or copper. Instead of windows, we thought of an infinity of dials marking all the different hours. Ah well! This dream has taken flight like others; we must confess that Geneva does not resemble a watch at all. It is very sad.

Upon our arrival (and it seems to us a trifle indecorous in an austere, republican, Calvinistic city) we were handed, in exchange for our passport, a facetious handbill beginning like the sketch-books of M. Crepin, M. Jabot, and Töpfer, the ingenious caricaturist, with this droll request, "Look on the back"—a long list of formalities to be complied with.

Geneva has the serious, somewhat rigid aspect of all Protestant cities. The houses are lofty, regular in shape; the straight line, the right angle reign supreme. The square and the parallelogram are met with everywhere. The curve and ellipse are proscribed as being too sensuous, too voluptuous; gray is the all-pervading color on the walls and in the garments of the citizens; the headgear of the inhabitants unintentionally inclines to the form of the Quaker hat; one instinctively feels that there ought to be a multitude of Bibles in the city and few pictures.

The only objects in Geneva which give the least scope for the fancy are the chimney flues. Nothing more bizarre or fantastic was ever seen anywhere. You remember those mountebanks whom the English called acropedestrians, and who, lying upon their backs with legs in the air, keep a wooden bar in motion, or two children covered with spangles. Imagine all the acropedestrians in the world repeating their performance on the roofs of the houses of Geneva, and you will be able to form some idea of the bifurcated and distorted flues struggling desperately; these distortions are probably caused by the wind rushing down from the mountains and blowing furiously through the valley. Possibly the Piedmontese chimney-doctors, before passing on into France, perfect their talent at Geneva, and execute there their masterpieces. These chimney flues are made of tin, are freshly painted and shine brightly in the sun. But let us leave the chimneys.

It is strange how a great name pervades a city. That of Rousseau pursued us all the time we remained in Geneva. It is hard to realize that the body of an immortal spirit has disappeared, that the form which enveloped divine thoughts has vanished never to return. We were also disappointed not to have encountered on some street corner the author of the *Nouvelle Heloise* wearing a fur hat and an Armenian robe, with sad and gentle manner, restless and dreamy air, mindful that his dog is following him and will not deceive him, as men do.

We do not propose to say anything about the temple of San Pierre, the principal church of the city. Protestant architecture consists of four walls, enlivened by the gray of the mouse and the yellow of the canary. It is too simple for us, and in the matter of art we are Catholic, Apostolic and Roman.

And yet, however cold, however rigid it may be, Geneva possesses a curiosity which would send Isabey,

Eugen Ciceri, Wyld, Lessere and Ballue into transports of rapture, but which would drive to despair any citizen possessed of civic pride. It is a block of barracks, a collection of hovels on the bank of the Rhone at the spot where it issues from the lake on its way to France. We can conscientiously recommend this monstrosity to the water-colorists, who will thank us for the suggestion.

Nothing about the barracks is plumb; the various stories bulge out or lean inward. It is an incredible mixture of wooden front, ends of planks, nailed laths, cracked, blackened, coated with green slime, bleared, decayed, grim, covered with leprosies and callosities that would ravish the soul of a Bonnington or a Decamps; the windows, with shutters hanging in haphazard fashion, and only half closed by broken panes, displayed festoons of tripe and bladders of pork, the nasturtiums and coboeas of this agreeable habitation; vinous, sanguinary tints dimmed by the rain, complete the truculent and ferocious aspect of these dog-kennels, whose silhouette the Rhone, which passes beneath, carries off on its dark blue tide.

Opposite these barracks are some tanneries which cause to be reflected in the current of the river under the beams from which they are suspended, the skins of calves, which assume in the water the appearance of drowned victims. This will signify, if you look at the matter from a romantic and nocturnal point of view, travelers lured into these sinister hovels which we have described by some pretty Maguelonne, there slaughtered by Salbadie, and their bodies hurled into the river from one of those casements from which the blood is dripping.

Let us go and wash away in the lake these sanguinary sights. Lake Lemane is the whole of Geneva. It is impossible, when one is in that city, to turn one's eyes away from it. All the windows in the city make an effort to face toward it, and houses stand on tiptoe and

try to peep at it over the shoulders of buildings more fortunately situated.

A flotilla of rowboats and sailboats, with awnings or without, await the pleasure of tourists at the mole near which the steamboats land.

Nothing is more delightful than to wander along the shore of that sheet of blue, transparent as the Mediterranean, bordered by villas which bathe their feet in the waters, and encompassed by blue mountains tapering off in the background. Mount Saleve, the Tooth of Morele, and hoary Mont Blanc, seemingly powdered with dust of Carrara marble, make a lace network of the horizon on the Swiss side, while on the side toward France are the undulations of the last fortresses of the Jurassic Alps. Fishing boats, with sails in the form of a pair of shears, drift lazily by, trailing their lines or drawing their nets. Lovers' barges, yawls, craft of every kind fly from one shore to the other in numbers sufficient to give animation to the picture without being so numerous as to spoil the effect by crowding.

The lake, however clear and tranquil, is still not without its dangers. We were told a story of a jeweler, wealthy and retired from business, who was drowned in it, together with a friend, their sails having been backed by the wind and the boat capsized. Only one of the bodies was recovered, although it does not seem possible for water so transparent to guard its secrets. The nimble divers vainly searched the lake to a depth of five hundred feet. Our boatman informed us that the body of the jeweler had either been drawn into the current of the Rhone, which traverses Lake Lemman, or else had been dissected by the crabs and thus prevented from rising to the surface. This story spoiled the lake for us in a measure, and made us resolve not to eat crabs under any pretext during our sojourn at Geneva.

We have a habit, when traveling, of reading all the

sign-boards and advertisements which are displayed to the eyes of the passing throng. This study of the walls apprised us that there was a fair-ground at Plein-Palais, the Champs Elysées of the city, conveniently supplied with wooden horses, wheels of fortune, and mountebanks. The advertisement of Mr. Kinne, of Vienna, announced great acrobatic performances which especially attracted us. The tight-rope dance, which really ought to be given in a Parisian theatre, is a very pleasing and interesting spectacle, and we have never been able to understand why the enthusiasm which Taglione, Ellsler, Carlotta Grisi, and the Cerrito arouse should not also extend to the tight-rope dancers, who are equally expert and whose art is more difficult and more dangerous.

It is on the Plein-Palais side of the city that the aristocratic quarter is located; those of the poorer classes, in which riots sometimes occur, the suburbs of Saint Marceau and Saint Anthony, are at the opposite end of the city, across the Rhone bridges.

A compact crowd, excited without being turbulent, wended its way toward the city gates. In this crowd of considerable proportions we encountered nothing remarkable in the way of costume. There were the fashions of France, a little belated, a little provincial; we noticed a slight peculiarity in the straw hats of the men, which had a black band and a cord of the same color; and in the wide rim of those worn by the women, which drooped in such a manner as to hide the greater part of the face and neck.

The women themselves have a French air, mingled with a German or American manner, which is easier to understand than to describe, and which is due to their religion. A Protestant woman neither sits, stands, nor walks like a Catholic, and her gown falls in different folds. Even her beauty is not the same as that of her Catholic sister; she has a peculiar, penetrating gaze, self-contained

like that of a priest, a formal smile, a studied meekness of expression, a sly air of modesty, all plainly indicating the housekeeper or minister's daughter.

Mr. Kinne occupied a canvas enclosure, roofed by the sky and lighted by a dozen lamps, the flames of which were sometimes so ardently licked by the evening breeze as to endanger their wooden supports. Kinne, let me say at once, is a great artist, and we were forcibly impressed by his talent. The slack and narrow rope has not supported many of equal merit. Perhaps you may fancy him as a thin, aerial looking young man, a human shuttlecock rebounding from an acrobatic battledore. You will be altogether mistaken. Attention! This is what is about to happen — the orchestra sounds a triumphant fanfare; the big drum booms; the counter-bass blows; the cymbals groan; the trombone roars; the clarionette whines; the fife yelps; the musicians, having regained their breath and renewed the strength of their arms, extract from their instruments the greatest volume of sound of which they are capable; everything indicates the entrance of a great artist, the star of the troupe; a great silence falls upon the multitude. From the box, which serves as wings for the stage of the mountebanks, imperiously leaps forth a big fellow shaped like a Hercules. He advances with an air of resolution toward the wooden horse which sustains the tightly-drawn rope; with his strong hand he seizes the rope and establishes himself upon it.

Nowhere in the painted Swiss windows of the sixteenth century, or in the wood carvings of the Triumph of Maximilian by Albert Durer, is there to be seen foot-soldier or cavalryman of a more stately or formidable bearing. From his peaked cap, like the bonnet of Gessler, wave three violent and dishevelled plumes, more distorted than the mantling of a Burgrave's escutcheon; his doublet was slashed in Spanish style and his girdle was with difficulty



buckled around his stomach, which needed to be encircled with iron, like the heart of Prince Henry, if it were not to burst. His neck projected from beneath his skull in three great folds to the nape, like the neck of a molossus, and supported a head which was square, bold, ferocious and jovial, the head of a soldier of Herod, or of the executioner of Calvary, or, if these comparisons are too Biblical, that of the heroes of the Niebelungen in the illustrations of Cornelius. His enormous limbs displayed their knotted muscles beneath white trunks, looking like oaks of the Hercynian forest in trousers, while his arms, with every movement, displayed biceps like bullets of forty-eight.

A balancing pole, doubtless made of a young pine tree from the mountain side, is thrown to this Polyphemus of the rope, who began to leap upon the cable, which every moment we feared would give away, with incredible ease, grace, and agility.

This fellow, alongside whom Hercules, Samson, Goliath and Milo of Crotona would have seemed consumptives, soon grew disdainful of such simple exercises; he placed chairs and tables by his side upon the rope and proceeded to partake of a repast upon it, and by way of expressing the idea of gaiety suitable to the dessert, danced a gavotte, with a child of twelve or fifteen years of age hanging on each foot.

This display of athletic prowess, in connection with an exercise seeming to require only suppleness and dexterity, produces a singular effect.

To this Cyclopean vaulting succeeded a polka, danced with much grace and precision upon two parallel ropes by two sisters of almost the same size. One of these young girls was really charming. She had a sweet and pretty air and winning smile. She appeared in two different costumes; first in a black corsage and white skirt spangled with stars; and afterwards in a yellow skirt

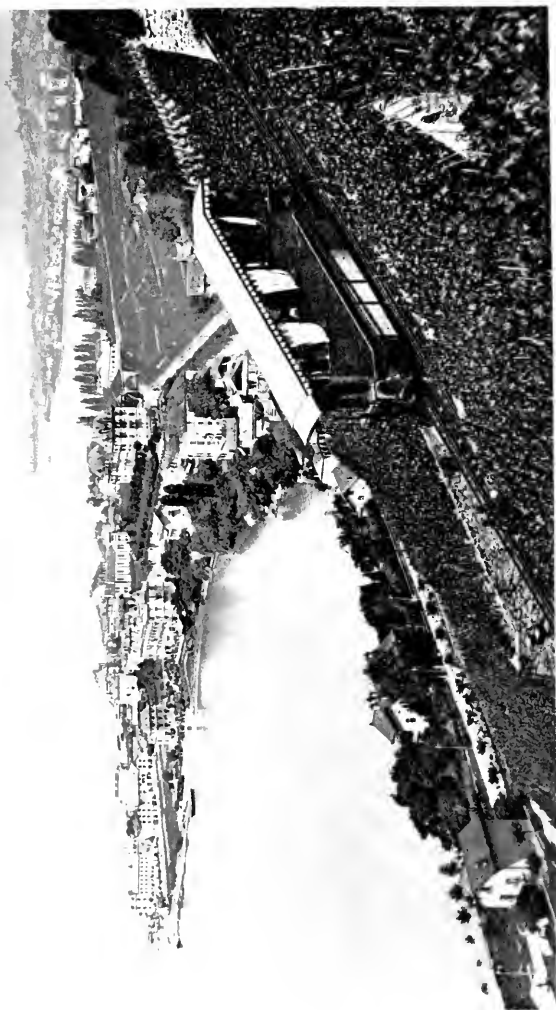
with a black corsage, which was very captivating. After the polka, she danced a *pas seul* on the rope, a classic step, forward and back, just as though she were on the boards of the opera.

After the rope-dance the girl executed the dance of the eggs: a number of eggs are laid out on the ground like checkers on a checker-board, and she is obliged to pass through the narrow lanes formed by the arrangement of the eggs, with her eyes bandaged and without striking with her foot a single egg. The least awkwardness on the girl's part would make an omelette of the dance; Mignon, assuredly, in her feat of agility before Wilhelm Meister, did not acquit herself more creditably than this young girl of Kinne's troupe before her Genevese public, nor was Goethe's model more charming than that supplied by her delicious figure. We seemed to hear leaping to her lips the melancholy air,

“Knowest thou the land where the citron blooms?”

The performance ended, every one hastens toward the city gates, which are closed at a certain hour, after which one must pay a fee to the gate-keeper to induce him to open them for you to enter the city.







*LAKE LEMAN*  
*Montreux and the Rigi Railway*



## CHAPTER II

### LAKE LEMAN—BRIGG—THE MOUNTAINS

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GENEVA had given us all the pleasures which a Protestant Sunday could allow: a trip on the lake, a marvelous sunset on Mont Blanc, and a charming vision of beautiful trees and a starry sky; it was time for us to take our departure.

We had at first wished to make the journey in a private carriage, but fortunately the price they demanded was so extravagant—taking us doubtless for Englishmen or Russian princes—that the bargain was not made, and we had the advantage of not being drawn at a snail's pace in one of those antediluvian vehicles by wretched horses worthy of the Paris cabs. The rapidity and the convenience of the journey, as subsequently made by us, amply recompensed us for this violation of local color.

A stage-coach was to conduct us to Milan, passing over the Simplon; not the same vehicle for the entire journey, since we were obliged to change at the border of almost every State through which we passed, the government having a monopoly of the means of transportation, and we had no other care than that of transferring ourselves from a Genevese coach to a Savoyard coach, which yielded us up to a Swiss coach, which in turn passed us over to a Piedmontese coach, which finally handed us over to an Austrian coach.

Do not think there is the least exaggeration in this; this flood of stage-coaches is the veritable truth: the truth itself is incredible.

In leaving Geneva one passes on to Coligny, from which place we enjoy an admirable view. Geneva is outlined at the head of the lake; the Alps and Mont

Blanc rise on the left (in turning toward the city), and on the right one discovers the distant Jura. It was near this place that we came across a country house in a most picturesque situation, and which belonged to that Doctor Tronchin so celebrated in the eighteenth century; it is still occupied by a Tronchin, of the family of the illustrious physician.

The first village of Savoy which one meets with is Dovanies or Dovenia. We fancied that we should see a population of young Savoyards, road-scrapers in hand, with knee-caps, armlets, and leather plate on seat of breeches, as portrayed in the verses of M. de Voltaire, the pictures of M. Hornung, and the traditions of Seraphin. It seemed to us that each chimney ought to bear on its top a figure besmeared with soot, with brilliant eyes and glittering teeth, uttering the cry so familiar to the children, "*Ramoni, ramona, la cheminée du haut en bas.*"

The Savoyards, who among themselves are known as *Savoisiens*, on account of their not having the air of Auvergnats, not only were not occupied with sweeping, but were celebrating a festival of some kind and were firing balls at a bird perched on the top of a fifty-foot pole. Each lucky hit was greeted by fanfares and sounding trumpets.

Leaving Dovenia, one loses sight of the lake, and traverses fields, well cultivated and of a fertile aspect; the Indian corn with its pretty tufts, the vineyards divided into terraces supported by little walls, some fig trees with big leaves, advise us of our approach to Italy.

Presently we return to the lake, not again to leave it. We pass by Thonon and Evian, where we stop for a few moments, and which is one of the most favorable points for acquiring a general view of Lake Lemman. Never have painters, without excepting even Sechan, Dicterle, and Despléchins, or Thierry and Cambon, arranged a



scene with so marvelous a regard for effect as that which is found at Evian by the simple chance of nature.

From the height of a terrace shaded by great trees, one perceives an abyss ; on approaching the parapet and looking down, one sees the tops of lesser trees and the roofs disfigured by tiles of wood or flat stones of the village below. This first plane, of a warm, vigorous tone, forms a most excellent set-off. It terminates in boats with slender prows, masts of salmon color, with clewed-up mainsails which are resting themselves on the shore. The second plane is the lake, and the third is the mountains of Switzerland, which unroll themselves for a stretch of a dozen leagues.

These are the grosser lineaments of the scene ; but that which the pencil can probably more powerfully depict than the pen is the color of the lake. The most glorious summer sky is assuredly less pure and less transparent. The rock-crystal and the diamond are not more limpid than the virgin water descending from neighboring glaciers.

The distance, the greater or less depth, the play of light, give to it vaporous, ideal, impossible tints, which seem to belong to another planet ; the cobalt, ultramarine, sapphire, turquoise, the azure of the most beautiful blue eyes, have shades which are dull in comparison with it.

Some reflections from the wing of the kingfisher ; some iris on the mother-of-pearl of certain shells alone give an idea of it, or some distant elysium and blue tints in the pictures of Paradise by Breughel.

One asks oneself if it is water and sky, or the azure mist of a dream that one has before him ; the air, the earth and the wave are reflected and mingled in the strangest fashion. Often a boat, drawing after it its shadow of dark blue, reveals to you that what you have taken for an opening in the sky is really a bit of the lake.

The mountains assume unimaginable shades, pearl and silver-grays and rose tints, hortensia and lilac, blue ashes like the ceilings of Paul Veronese; here and there some white spots scintillate, — they are Lausanne, Vevey, Villeneuve. The shadow of the mountains reflected in the water is so pure in tone, so transparent, that one cannot longer distinguish the meaning of objects; the slight chill of silver which hems the banks of the lake is necessary in order to recover it. Above the first chain the Tooth of Morcle shows its two whitish prongs.

It is at this point that the Rhone enters the lake; the Rhone, which we shall follow as far as Brigg.

At Saint Gengough, good-byes must be said to Lake Lemman, which, in fact, stops there, and terminates at the foot of Villeneuve its great debauch of azure. All of this day passed like a dream, in a bath of blue and tender light, in a mirage of Fata Morgana. What enchanting harmony, what Athenian and tempered grace, what ineffable sweetness, what chaste voluptuousness, what a sweet and mysterious caress of nature enwrapping the soul!

This journey along the border of the lake recalls to us a day of heavenly enjoyment passed at Grenada, on the Mulhaacen, on the same date ten years ago, in an ocean of snow, of light, and of azure.

In leaving Lake Lemman in the distance, the road still remains picturesque, although nothing can replace the effect of that immense mirror, of that sky melting into water.

We follow a road bordered by fine trees, whose shade preserves the freshness of the valley. Rocks tower on either side to prodigious heights; one of them seems terminated by a castle, with its towers, crenelated ramparts, its donjon keep, its pepper-box watch-towers. The snow, in silvering the projections and cornices of the rock, makes the illusion still more complete; the imagination

cannot otherwise fancy the dwelling-place of the Job of Victor Hugo.

The Rhone glides to the bottom of the valley, now near by, now far away, but always yellow and tempestuous, rolling along with it in its flow, stones and gravel, and often changing its place in its bed, like a restless man ill with a fever. The river has great need of passing through the filter of Lake Lemman in order to acquire that deep blue which characterizes it in setting out from Geneva; since, as the great poet whom we have just quoted has remarked, "The Rhone is blue as the Mediterranean, where it empties itself, and the Rhine, green as the ocean toward which it runs."

It is sad that this charming landscape should be peopled with those afflicted with goitre; one encounters at every step women, often comely beneath their little national hat trimmed with red ribbons, who are afflicted with this disgusting deformity.

The goitre is like the membranous pocket which the pelican carries under its beak. They are some of them enormous. Is it the shadow of the mountains, or the harshness of the snow-water which causes this horrible deformity? It has never been determined. Women, especially old women, are more subject to the disease than men. There can be no greater affliction. The cretin, with his depressed skull, his tuberculous neck, sneering and growling at your carriage door. Hideous picture! Behold man fallen below the animal; the animal has its instinct.

We dined at Saint Maurice, a big fortified town on the bank of the Rhone, and of a very stern appearance. On the hotel walls hung some lithographs, representing military exploits of Switzerland: Gen. Wm. Henry Dufour surrounded by his staff, Hussy d'Argovie, Eschmann, Frey-Herosé, Pfoender de Lindenfrey, Zimmerli, and several others. There were also portraits of Ochsen-

bein, President of the Diet in 1847, and of Jacques Robert Steiger. Let us remark here that all the pictures in these inns come from the Rue des Maçons-Sorbonne in Paris, and represent the four seasons and four parts of the world.

At Saint Maurice we were put into a fantastic one-seated vehicle, in which one could not stretch himself out straight, nor double up nor lie down, nor sit comfortably, so ingenious was its construction. This vehicle conveyed us to Marigny, where we were made to climb into a stage-coach.

Night fell cold and foggy, and we commenced to discern with difficulty the confused and gigantic forms of the mountains; we passed through Sion half asleep, and when day appeared at the end of a valley traversed by torrents and rendered moist by marshy infiltrations, Brigg showed itself with its bell-towers and buildings crowned with tin balls, which give it the air of a Kremlin on a small scale. Here the pass of the Simplon begins. One is only separated by a mountain crest from that Italy whose name is so powerful, according to Henri Heine, that it compels even the Philistine Berlinesse to sing *Tirily*.

The pass of the Simplon which we are about to traverse, is a marvel of human genius. Napoleon, remembering the difficulty which Hannibal in other days encountered in melting the Alps with vinegar, as the historians seriously narrate, wished to spare the conquerors desirous of returning to Italy that labor, and caused this miraculous road to be built within three years.

Ancient vinegar must have been terribly strong, since one hundred and sixty thousand pounds of powder and ten thousand men were required to build on the rugged side of the mountain this imperceptible streak which is called a *road*.

The plain rises by a quite gentle inclination, between two banks of mountains which seem as though they

could be touched with one's fingers, although they are really quite distant; but in Alpine regions one is deceived in regard to distance almost every moment by the perpendicularity of the planes. The crests left behind are covered with snow; it is a ramification of the Helvetic Alps; on their sides, which seem inaccessible even to the foot of the goat, are held in suspension, one knows not how, villages recognized by their bell-towers, the only objects visible. Huts lost in the mountains, with their penthouses of wood and roofs covered with stones for fear of their being carried off by the wind, reveal at once the unexpected presence of man; there, blockaded by frost and avalanche, the shepherds pass the winter far from all human intercourse. Where you expect to meet only eagles and the chamois, you will find men and women haymakers; the cultivation of the soil mounts to dizzy heights. We saw a woman there, raking hay at the edge of a precipice fifteen hundred feet deep, in a field with an inclination like a slanting roof, and which was dotted with cows, the tinkling of whose bells we heard.

Brigg is already visible at the bottom of the valley, looking like one of those boxes of German toys representing a village carved in wood. There are the same proportions in both. The balls of tin shine like spangles in the morning rays. The Rhone seems no more than a yellow thread.

To the right of the road extends, as far as the eye can see, a horizon of mountains, lifting their heads one above another, and forming a sublime panorama.

Mont Blanc, at the base of this magnificent chaos, puts forth several of its snowy pinnacles.

On the left are great forests of fir trees of surprising vigor and beauty; the fir tree is the grass of the mountain. It bears the same relation to the mountains as the grass to the meadow. That abrupt escarpment which

seems to be so velvety, with patches of moss here and there, is in reality covered with firs and birches sixty feet high.

These blades of grass would serve as masts for ships ; this scratching of the skin of the mountain is a valley which might hide and which often does hide a village in its folds. This whitish and immobile band, which you would take for a vein of snow, is a foaming torrent which is precipitating itself headlong with a horrible noise one does not hear, so far off is it.

There can be nothing finer or more magnificent than the beginning of the Simplon pass, in coming from Geneva ; immensity does not exclude charm ; a certain voluptuous grace clothes these colossal undulations ; the fir trees are of a green so fresh, so mysterious, so tender in its intensity ; they have a carriage so elegant, so unconstrained, so *svelte* ; they stretch out their arms to you in so friendly a manner under their coverings of verdure ; they know so well how to assume the air of columns with their silvered trunks ; the brooks with their silvery voices prattle so prettily by your side under the stones or the aquatic plants ; the precipices are so attractive that one feels in a state of extraordinary exhilaration and as though he would willingly launch himself head first into these beautiful gorges.

We keep alongside of a delightful abyss for some time, at the bottom of which the Saltine makes foamy leaps and dishevels itself in the most picturesque manner. The forests of firs present a singular aspect. The trunks of the trees, cut some feet from the ground, have the appearance of columns such as are erected in Turkish cemeteries, and one asks with astonishment how so many Osmanlis came to be buried on a Swiss mountain. When the cutting has been done recently, the gash made by the axe discloses clear salmon tints, which greatly resemble human flesh ; one might think of them as the wounds

made in the bodies of those nymphs whom the ancients supposed to inhabit the interior of trees. Regarded in this light, the fir tree assumes an interesting and sorrowful air ; sometimes the earth has given way under its feet and it has slipped half way down the precipice, held back in its fall by the arms of some more solid friends.

At regular distances houses of refuge, designated by a number and of which there are eight in all, if our memory does not deceive us, are at the service of travelers overtaken by a storm, a snowslide or an avalanche. Even in these solitary wilds, apparently so desolate, human thoughtfulness nevertheless accompanies and protects you.

When you believe yourself entirely alone with Nature and God, drowned in the vast sea of immensity, a laborer, who humbly breaks stones and busies himself with filling up the rut which was about to overturn your carriage, recalls you to the feeling of the universal solidarity of the race. In this profound isolation one of your brothers is working for you ; a herd of frightened goats climb the length of the perpendicular walls formed by the rocks, leaping from one rough spot to another with incredible agility in spite of the cry of the herdsman who calls them ; a piece of cultivated ground appears all at once ; a group of houses informs us that there human beings love and hate, suffer and are glad, live and die as on the plain and in the city ; isolated cabins reveal hearts strong enough to support without dejection of spirit this spectacle of immensity and to remain face to face with God, in spite of all human distraction.

Arrived at a point where the valley runs through a deep cut into which all the torrents and all the streams which gush from the mountains and cross the road by subterranean conduits hurl themselves, we cross a bridge with abutments of a prodigious height, then we make a bend and begin to mount another slope.

Here is found the relay house, its two sets of buildings connected by a covered gallery in the form of a bridge.

Mount Alost, which we had all along seen at the end of the perspective, hides its snowy head on the horizon, and we have before us the Pflecht-Horn with its cap of ice from whence torrents flow, and a little further off, the Schoen-Horn, its summit hidden by clouds; the fir trees become more scattered, vegetation is sensibly impoverished; nevertheless, hardy plants continue to keep company with man and recall the idea of life in those places where all seems dead. The rhododendron displays its vivid green and its beautiful flower, which is here called the *rose of the Alps*; the blue gentian, the saxifrage, the dogwood with its red flowers, the myosotis, with its little turquoise stars, climb the mountain bravely with you, taking advantage of a narrow thread of water, a little earth in the crevice of the rock, a fissure in the schist, of the slightest favorable chance. Man himself never gives up; he builds even on the ice, at the risk of being carried off by water and by snow; he seems to make it a point to dwell in uninhabitable localities.

We had now reached almost the highest point of the pass, something like five thousand feet above the level of the sea. There was nothing between us and the sky except the glacier of Pflecht-Horn, from which four almost perpendicular torrents precipitate themselves; four waterspouts of froth and mud. We could distinctly see the first of these torrents leap from the edge of the glacier in a cascade of crystalline green. It was strange and beautiful to behold this foaming and powdery water, which passes over the road, come rushing from the height of this peak, covered over in this place by a vaulted gallery which the infiltrations have adorned with stalactites, and which has now the appearance of a natural grotto; some openings permit us to see the cataract underneath, which falls roaring into the abyss. The



other waters rumble and fly in rockets of silver, in snowy foam, with an unimaginable noise and turbulence. The sight was very wild and romantic. The Pflecht-Horn at this height offers to the view nothing more than meagre soil, rocks, ice, snow, torrential waters; the skin of the planet appears in all its nudity, which some compassionate cloud veils from time to time with its covering cloak.

From this point the road begins to descend; we leave the Helvetic declivity for the Italian declivity, and here is a curious thing! From the moment we left the summit which separates the two regions we were struck with the great difference in temperature. On the Helvetic side there was charming, soft, warm, bright weather; on the Italian side a glacial wind blew, and great clouds, like fogs, passed over us and enwrapped us; the cold was atrocious, and very perceptible on account of the contrast. The cloak and coat that we never wanted to carry when going South scarcely sufficed to keep our teeth from chattering.

The old hospice of the Simplon appeared upon a lower plateau, to the right of the road, coming from Switzerland; it is a yellowish structure, surmounted with a high bell-tower. The new hospice, much larger, is on the left. Travelers in peril or worn out with fatigue are received in it. There are lavished upon them gratuitously the needs which their condition calls for. Wealthy people who enjoy its hospitality donate something for the church. At the moment we were passing in front of the hospice, two priests came out, one young, the other old but of a vigorous old age, who descended the side toward Italy; they both wore hats with turned-up brims, short breeches, black stockings, buckled shoes; it was the ancient costume of the priest, worn with the ease and security of ecclesiastics in a truly religious country.

The character of the mountains, which one might naturally suppose would become more mild and laughing in its aspect in approaching Italy, assumes, on the contrary, an extraordinary roughness and savagery. It might be said that Nature had made a jest of our preconceptions, or that she wished to prepare a set-off, as the painters say, for the gracious perspectives which she was about to unfold. This reversal of characteristics is very curious; it is Switzerland that is Italian and Italy that is Swiss, on this astonishing pass of the Simplon.

From the beginning of the descent, which ends at the village of Simplon, is a distance of two leagues, which are rapidly traversed; we cross several times a very blustering and greatly convulsed torrent, along which passes a stream, conducted in wooden tubes, after the manner of an aqueduct, toward the fields which it irrigates.

As we traveled along, we compared these mountains to the different Spanish Sierras which we had seen. The contrast is very great; the Sierra Morena with its great strata of red marble, its green oaks, and its cork trees; the Sierra Nevada, with its jeweled torrents in which oleanders are steeped, its folds, its shot-color satin reflections, its peaks, which the evening light makes blush like young girls when spoken to of love; the Jura Alps with their escarpments bathed by the sea, their old Moorish cities and their lookout towers perched upon some inaccessible plateau, their declivities where the burnt grass is like a lion's skin; the Sierra Guadarrama all bristling with masses of bluish granite, in nowise resembling the Alps, thus nature, by means of elements similar in appearance, knows well how to produce varied effects.



## CHAPTER III

### THE SIMPLON — DOMO D'OSSOLA — LUCIANO ZANE

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THE village of Simplon is composed of a few houses huddled together by the side of the road, and assists in relieving the fatigue of the journey for travelers. We stopped to dine there at a very good inn. The walls of the dining-room were covered with a grayish paper representing the conquest of India by the English, and might have served as an illustration for the wars of Nizam de Méry, by reason of the mélange of lords and brahmins, ladies and bayaderes, of caleches and palanquins, of horses and elephants, of half-naked peons and liveried lacqueys, of sepoys and of horse-guards, which make this tapestry an Indian encyclopedia very pleasant to consult while waiting for the soup. Some facetious artists have taken the liberty of providing a mustache for the chief bayadere, a pipe for Lady William Bentinck, a calico bonnet for the Governor, and a queue for the venerable chief of the bandits, but these facetious decorations do not destroy the general harmony. This Indo-Anglican wall paper also does duty as a register, and receives the names of the travelers.

The descents become more and more rapid; the valley through which the road winds strangles itself in a gorge; the mountains at the sides are frightfully steep; the rocks are abrupt, perpendicular — sometimes, even, they overhang the road. Their walls, which threaten to fall at every moment, show clearly that they yielded a passage after long resistance, and that it was neces-

sary to burn much powder in order to secure the right of way through them. The colors grow darker, and the light now penetrates with the greatest difficulty to the bottom of these narrow cuts. Some spots of a sombre green, almost black, which are forests of fir trees, speckle the fawn-colored rocks like a tiger's skin, and give them a ferocious aspect. The torrents become cascades, and at the bottom of the gigantic fissures, which seem the result of the stroke of a Titan's axe, the Doveria roars and tumbles like a river in a rage, and rolls along with it, on its course, blocks of granite, enormous stones, earth in a state of fusion, and a whitish smoke instead of water; its bed much wider than the stream, and in which it wallows and convulsively tears itself to pieces, has the appearance of a street in a Cyclopean city after an earthquake; it is a chaos of rocks, of blocks of marble, of fragments of mountain which assume the aspect of entablatures, of architraves, of pieces of columns and fragments of walls; in other places white stones form immense ossuaries; one might imagine that cemeteries of mastodons and of antediluvian animals had been uncovered by the passage of the waters. All is ruin, ravage, desolation, menace and peril; the uprooted trees are split in pieces like wisps of straw, the rocks sucked in by the flood strike against each other with a terrible noise, and yet we are in the mild season of the year. In winter the passage must be almost impossible and very formidable. We would suggest that the decorators who desire to paint a wild and weird forge for the casting of the bullets of the Freyschütz come and make some sketches in the valley of Gondo.

This Doveria, however furious and devouring it may be, has nevertheless performed great services; man, without its aid, would not have been able to cut a path through these colossal masses of rock. With its water, which suffers no obstacles, it has broken the road







*THE RIVER DOVERLA*

*On the Simplon Pass*



for the engineer. Its course is a rough outline of the pass. Torrent and pass go side by side assiduously. In so far as it is the torrent which encroaches upon the pass, just so far is it the pass which encroaches upon the torrent. Sometimes a rock opposes a gigantic rampart which cannot be surmounted or got round, in which case a gallery dug in the rock with chisel and mine overcomes the difficulty.

The gallery of Gondo, pierced by two openings which would furnish most admirable caverns for a melodrama, is one of the longest in existence after that of Algaby, which is two hundred feet long. It bears, at one end, this brief and fitting inscription: "*Aere Italico. 1795. Nap-Imp.*"

Near this place the Frasinine and two torrents which come from the glaciers of Rosboden precipitate themselves into the abyss with an astonishing noise and fury. The road follows a cornice projecting over the chasm. The walls of rocks approach close to each other, rugged, bristling, beetling, black, out of plumb, and only permitting a narrow strip of sky to be seen between their summits, two thousand feet high, and which shines as far away from you as hope. Below is night, cold, death; no ray of sunlight ever reaches there. It is the most wildly picturesque spot of the whole pass.

Across this disorder of nature it rolls, turns almost at a right angle and very suddenly. Although in Spain we have thrice descended this sort of mountain, which is called the Descarga, at a full gallop, in the midst of cries of the driver, in a fusillade of cuts of the whip, and of objurgations, we could not rid ourselves of feeling as though we were tumbling down on three wheels (the fourth being held by the brake) the whole length of extremely steep declines unfurnished with parapets at almost all the dangerous places. It seemed as though we should be overturned every minute; nevertheless we were

not, and the tops of the larches or of the rocks which rise up from the bottom of the abyss were deprived of the pleasure of empaling us. In the winter season sledges are used, and, say the guides, if the sledge slips into the gulf, one has time to jump to one side. Blessed privilege!

After crossing strong bridges, tremendous tunnels, one of which carries all the weight of the mountain on a pile of masonry, we come to a region somewhat less enclosed. The valley becomes wider, the Doveria spreads itself more at its ease, the piled-up clouds and fogs scatter into light fleeces. Light comes more generously from the sky; that gray, green, hard, and glacial tint which characterizes the Alpine horrors, is warmed up a bit; a few houses gather courage and poke their noses across bunches of trees on the less steep grades, and presently we arrive at Isella, a little village where we find the first Piedmontese customhouse.

The customhouse is a building enclosed by a portico with arcades supported by columns of gray granite. On the wall we notice a solar dial in a state of desuetude, since the beams of the planet can never reach it. It bears the following inscription: "*Torna, tornando il sol, l'ombra smarrita, ma non ritorna piu l'eta fuggita*"—the vanished shadow returns when the sun returns, but vanished age never returns. The Italian *conceitto* plays in philosophic thought upon *torna, tornando, ritorna*. Ah! how much more simply terrible was the warning once given us by the dial of the Church of Irrugue of the flight of the hours, in approaching the Spanish frontier: "*Vulnerant omnes, ulterior necat*"—all wound, the last kills. Dials and hands, we listen to your words, and we have engraved on our seal: "*Vivere memento*"—remember to live. In passing before you, we hasten our steps, even though fatigued, and though it might be a pleasant place for us in which to pitch our tent;

for we understand that we must hasten to visit that country in whose vast net we shall soon be enclosed.

The landscape brightens and becomes cheerful. Wagons and ox-carts come and go; the peasants turn out into the side paths; the women, quite pretty, wearing a large red band at the bottom of their skirts, stare at us out of their big Southern eyes. There are white villas; some bell-towers rise amid waves of green; the vine displays itself in garlands, in festoons; we feel, by reason of a certain elegance in our environment, that we are no longer in Switzerland. The Doveria continues to roll along in its stony bed, but at a respectful distance, like a rough and uncouth companion who prefers to leave you at the city's gate; nevertheless, the appearance of the embankment, which is here and there strewn with large boulders, — an arch of a bridge carried away by the flood, — testifies to its bad character. Napoleon, who built it for eternity, could not make the bridge sufficiently solid to withstand the blows inflicted by the torrent. This lovely valley is called Dovearo.

A singular characteristic, not at all Italian, at least according to our Northern ideas, is the umbrella, the patriarchal old umbrella, carried by all the people we met, men, women, and children; the beggar himself has his umbrella. We well understand why.

At the last turn of the road appears a chapel watching over a cemetery; then we reach the bridge of Crevola, which brings to an end marvelously all the wonders of the Simplon.

This bridge, which has two arches supported by a pier and abutments, is of an enormous height (the cross of a church beneath it reaches scarcely to the balustrade), and encompasses the valley of Domo d'Ossola, which can be seen from it in its entirety. Alongside the bridge, a wooden foot-bridge thrown across the Doveria is used to connect the houses of the town scattered upon both banks.

Italy presents itself to us under an unexpected aspect. Instead of a sky of azure, the warm and orange-colored tones we had dreamed of, — forgetting that after all the Italy of the North cannot have the climate of Naples, — we encountered a cloudy sky, mountains veiled in mists, perspectives bathed in a bluish fog, a damp landscape, verdurous, velvety, worthy to be sung by a Lake poet. While not affording the picture we had fancied, that which was before our eyes was nevertheless very beautiful; these mountains with clouds dissolving into rain; these green plains sown with villas; this road bordered by houses festooned with vines propped up by pillars of granite; these gardens, enclosed by stone slabs which encircle them, formed, in spite of the storms, a pleasing and magnificent whole. Each detail of construction already revealed an appreciation of beauty and a regard for form which exists neither in France nor Switzerland.

We approached Domo d'Ossola, where we encountered a driving rain, which, for the reasons already given, did not take us unawares. The square market-place of Domo d'Ossola is quite picturesque with its arcade supported by columns, its jutting balconies and overhanging roofs, its pillared galleries, and its pavilions surmounted by weather vanes.

The inn at which the stage-coach halted was decorated in the Italian fashion, with huge frescoes, or rather, distempered daubs representing landscapes, intermingled with palm trees and exotic plants. Around the central court runs, as in the Spanish Patio, a gallery with grayish columns. It was now seven o'clock in the evening, and we were to leave at two in the morning, and it rained as though a new deluge was beginning.

We had dined at the village of Simplon, and therefore the resource of passing time at table was interdicted. We asked the hotel waiter if perchance there was any play to be seen in the town.

The theatre was closed, and the master of marionettes had brought his performance to a close that very evening ; but he had not yet left Domo d'Ossola. The idea occurred to us of organizing a performance for ourselves alone ; and so, accompanied by a guide who regarded us as lunatics, plunging through the rain-drops, we sought the marionettist. Walking along we tried to grasp some of the chief features of the town. By the failing light of day one could still distinguish pious paintings on the walls, highly-colored statuettes of the Madonna, lighted by lamps.

One of these frescoes had for its subject the Holy Virgin extricating souls from Purgatory, accompanied by Saint Gervais and Saint Protas. These representations are frequent in the streets and along the roads in Italy ; at every step one encounters little shrines depicting Calvaries in relief and *au naturel*, Our Lady, Guardian Angels, or devotions peculiar to the country. The marionettist was not at home ; he had gone to sup at the Osteria, and in spite of the cruelty of disturbing the poor man when about to drink his bottle of red wine and eat a little fried *polenta*, we kept up our courage to the end of our caprice, and Luciano Zane (that was the name of the impressario) consented for twenty francs to give us a special performance, charmed, though a trifle surprised at the idea. He demanded an hour in which to assemble his orchestra, summon his assistant, clothe his actors, arrange his decorations, and to illuminate the hall.

At the end of an hour, in the rain which had not ceased, we repaired to the theatre. An argand lamp, placed close by a billboard on which we read "*Si recita*," indicated the entrance. The gamins of the town, whom we had permitted to attend, occupied the benches, and it was a pleasure to see their black eyes sparkle and their pretty red lips break into laughter by the

light of the lamps which were doubled in brilliancy by the mirror placed behind them as a reflector. Nothing could be more simple than this playhouse, which consisted of four whitewashed walls, some benches, a wooden gallery and a stage, raised three or four feet above the body of the theatre. The curtain, owing to a vague memory of art which has never died out in Italy, was a copy of the famous fresco of the Aurora of Guido, which is to be seen in the Rospigliosi palace, and the engraving of which is so popular, but in the strangest imaginable Etruscan and Carib taste.

The orchestra, composed of four typical musicians, one of whom bravely beat time with his foot, played a brief overture, and the curtain was raised to our great satisfaction and to that of the little village girls, who stood up in order to see better.

The first performance was that of *Girolamo, calife pour vingt-quatre heures*, or *les Vivants qui font semblant d'être mort*; it is the story of the "Thousand and One Nights," brought into the palace by Haroun-al-Raschid and his faithful Giaffir, mixed up with a comic opera plot, which Messrs. Scribe and Saint George would not have been ashamed of, and of which perhaps they are the authors. Girolamo, who speaks the Piedmontese dialect, while the other actors use pure Italian, wore a French coat of the color of *raisin de Corinthe*, a disordered peruke, with a grotesquely cork-screwed queue. His mask was grinning, his mouth twisted, his eyes starting from his head; he sputtered, gesticulated, and acted like one possessed. Girolamo is a type which is met with in several plays, as for instance, "Girolamo, the Music Master;" "Girolamo, the Physician in Spite of Himself." He is a sort of Sganarelle, but more subtle, more spicy, less dull. In certain parts he resembles Mayeux; he is sensual, seductive, a cheat, if necessary, and adds to it all a certain stamp of stupidity and

rusticity which the marionettist who animates this *ner-vis alienis mobile lignum* makes very sensibly felt, and each entrance of Girolamo is greeted with shouts of laughter.

It was a strange spectacle, and one which very soon assumed a distinguishing reality, though only a performance of marionettes.

Never did caricaturist sketch a more bitter parody of life.

Hogarth, Cruickshank, Goya, Daumier, Gavarni, did not attain to such a height of involuntary irony.

How many celebrated actors would have blushed in spite of themselves had they seen their gestures, manœuvres, and faults, their poses, which they had studied before the mirror, repeated with a mechanical stupidity more cruel than all the criticisms in the world.

Was it not, on the other hand, the whole secret of the human comedy? Here were some dozens of automations, without life or spirit, bits of wood in motley tatters, to whom two or three hidden hands gave a phantom of existence, and caused to speak, as they wished them to, with voices which were not in their own throats.

Luciano Zane and his assistant made Girolamo, Haroun-al-Raschid, Giaffir and the other personages converse; a woman's voice of contralto timbre lent its organ to the princess and to the odalisques; this voice was that of Luciano Zane's wife, perched on a bench behind the curtain alongside of her husband.

The decorations were not badly done, and resembled, through the exaggeration of the perspective, the well-known optical views for children. The interior of the palace of the caliph showed efforts of the imagination to attain to Oriental splendor; some negroes carrying torches served as caryatides. The chief play was followed by a mythological ballet, the *Vengeance of Medea*, in which the choreographers had not regarded the

precept of Horace to the effect that Medea should not devour her children in public, since the magician immolated with the most savage fury two little puppets on springs, and formed a tableau which in no way resembled the picture of Eugene Delacroix.

In order not to annoy certain dancers of our acquaintance, we will not describe the *pas seul* and *pas de deux* of the principal performers, who fully equalled Saint Leon in the matter of elevation.

The ballet finished, we went behind the stage. Luciano Zane showed us his repertoire composed of several manuscripts in Italian, with an interlinear translation in dialect; his actors and their wardrobe were stowed away in drawers; he had there, reposing side by side in perfect accord, the high priest, the king, the queen, the princess, the caliph, Girolamo, the genius of good, the genius of evil, Death, David, and Goliath, the gallant and his dame, — all the personages of that little automaton world, — the glittering dresses covered with spangles and gewgaws.

This sight made us think of the beginning of the memoirs of Wilhelm Meister, where he narrates his childish passion for marionettes, and of the evening on which he took to Marianne, the comedienne, with whom he was in love, and who perhaps expected another sort of gift, the little figures which had so amused his youth and which had developed in him a taste for the theatre. He explained at length the character and use of each puppet to the young woman, who glanced toward the bed from time to time, and ended by going to sleep on his shoulder; a wise hint by which we ourselves may well profit.

We returned enchanted with Luciano Zane, who writes his plays himself, paints his decorations, models and clothes his marionettes, until we were informed that the really great genius of this sort, the illustrious,



incomparable master of the art was a certain Famiola de Varallo, a wonderful man, whose marionettes opened and closed their eyes and mouths, who does not recite, but improvises and makes political allusions of an unheard-of audacity and finesse; altogether a charming man, full of wit, who addresses to the women, of whom his theatre is always full, a thousand *bon mots* and jokes which make them laugh till they cry. We were told that he had represented the capture of Peschiera with guns, cannon, and soldiers in correct uniform, that he has perfect danseuses with whom all the men in the audience fall violently in love when they dance the Saltarelle; in a word, that Famiola is the greatest man in the world; he has only one defect, which is that he is at present at Palenza, on Lake Maggiore, from whence he is about to depart. We were already thinking of interrupting our journey and going in pursuit of Famiola, and of following him to the end of the world after having found him, when someone comes to tell us that it is time to climb into the stage-coach.

Instead of following Famiola, as we wished, we started for Milan. This was the wiser course; but, rolling along in the darkness, we all the while beheld again the beautiful marionettes, who made extravagant gestures and caracoled across the vista of our dreams.



## CHAPTER IV

### LAKE MAGGIORE—SESTO-CALLENDE— MILAN

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THE rain continued, and the confused light of dawn was swallowed up in clouds lying so low as almost to touch the ground, and were confounded with the vapors that rose from the earth. We crossed twice, on ferry-boats, a little torrential stream, already swollen by the storm, and when day appeared, we were on the shore of Lake Maggiore, near Baveno. The water, disturbed by the bad weather of the night, was considerably ruffled and the lake put on airs by raising billows like the sea. Nevertheless, the sky became clear; but great black and gray clouds remained piled upon the mountains on the other side of the lake. The mountains, of a healthy color, which they owe to the vegetation which covers them, and which gives them an appearance similar to that of Mount Rosa, or the Simplon and the Saint Gothard, are sublime at the base of the perspective; their reflections give a brown tint to the water; and the landscape is severe; Lake Maggiore, which we had pictured as a cup of gold filled with blue, was an evil and tempestuous menace. We found beauty where we had expected grace.

The road hems the lake and the waves lick the causeway. We pass an interminable succession of gardens and villas with white peristyles, roofs with round tiles, and terraces garlanded with luxuriant vines, supported by props of granite. Granite takes the place of the fir tree with us. Fences are made of it as well as stakes and even planks, and still oftener flagstones, on which







*LAGO MAGGIORE*

*The Borromeo Islands*

the washerwomen cleanse the linen on the border of the lake, upon their knees, as though begging pardon of it for this outrage. On these terraces, often of several gradients and which form embankments for carefully cultivated gardens, all kinds of flowers and shrubs bloom. We noticed there, on several occasions, and greatly to our astonishment, since it was the first time we had encountered this oddity, massive giant hortensias, which, in place of having that rose or mauve shade which is habitual to them in France, display tints of a charming azure; these blue hortensias have often surprised us, since blue is the chimera of the horticulturists who seek without ever finding a blue tulip, a blue rose or a blue dahlia, the number of flowers of that color being extremely restricted. We have written this in fear and trembling lest we shall be upbraided by Alphonse Karr, who is not indulgent to the botanical ignorance of litterateurs. But the hortensias of Lake Maggiore are incontestably blue. We were told that they had been obtained by making them grow in earth of heather. This was the recipe of the gardener of the Boromean Isles, and must be a good one; for all these hortensias, the color of the sky, are magnificent. The same result can also be obtained by sprinkling the earth with soda.

The Borromean Isles, three in number, Isle of Madre, Isle of Bella, Isle of the Fishermen, are situated near the northern end of the lake, which is shaped like a horn, the small end of which points towards Domo d'Isola.

These isles were originally bare and sterile rocks. Prince Borromeo caused vegetable earths to be conveyed to them and gardens constructed, whose reputation is European. We say "constructed" designedly, for masonry plays an important role in their designs, as in almost all Italian gardens, which are much rather bits of architecture than gardens.

More marble is planted in them than shrubs, and Vignole has had more to do with this construction than Le Nôtre or la Quintinie. The Isle of Madre, as well as the Isle of Bella, is composed of a superposition of terraces in recoil upon which a palace looks down. The Isle of Bella, which can be very distinctly seen from the road, is adorned with small towers, pinnacles, statues, fountains, porticoes, colonnades, vases, and architectural decoration of the richest style. Even such trees as the cypress, orange, myrtle, lemon, cedar, and Canada pine are to be found; but vegetation is evidently only an accessory. The simple idea of putting in a garden of verdure, some flowers and sod is an idea of very modern origin, like all natural ideas. A little farther off, is the Isle of the Fishermen, which insists that its arcaded houses, whose rustic appearance forms a happy contrast with the somewhat pretentious pomp of the Isle of Madre and the Isle of Bella, shall bathe their feet in the waters of the lake.

These isles have been the subjects of enthusiastic descriptions which are not justified, as seen from the shore. The seven terraces of the Isle of Bella, terminated by a unicorn or Pegasus, have a theatrical aspect which scarcely accords with the word *humilitas*, the device adopted by the Borromeos, which is found inscribed upon the isle on every side. The Isle of Madre and its five embankments, supporting a square castle, fatigue the eye with too great regularity, and one is astonished that they should have been so warmly praised. We found on this isle the ideal and prototype of the French garden as it existed in the days of Louis XIV, and such as Antoine, the gardener of Boileau, would have loved. Romantic imaginations, without any disparagement to Rousseau, who wished to lodge his Julie there, will do well to seek another site in which to domicile their heroines; these isles would be more pleasing to the princesses of Mme. de Lafayette.



It is at Belgirata, a little this side of Arona, that Manzoni lives, the illustrious author of *Promessi sposi*. He is often to be seen seated before his door, in full view of the lake, watching the travelers as they pass. He has a benevolent, venerable, and distinguished bearing, and in his spare meagreness of feature reminds one of M. de Lamartine. Every day, one of his friends, a profound metaphysician and philosopher, goes to his house to discuss with him those great questions of man's origin and destiny which can never be solved here below, since they deal with the loftiest mysteries of the soul.

The lake and the road are very animated: the lake on account of the fishing-boats and steamers which ply between Sesto-Calende and Bellinzona; the road, with its ox-carts, carriages, and pedestrians armed with the inevitable umbrella.

The country women, sometimes pretty, are afflicted, as they are in Valais, with goitres, produced probably by the same causes,—the vicinage of the mountains and the snow-water,—similar causes producing similar effects.

In approaching Arona we discover, upon a hill on the right, the colossal statue of Saint Charles Borromeo, overlooking the lake; it is, after the Colossus of Rhodes and that of Nero at the Maison Dorée, the grandest statue ever executed.

The saint, posed in a majestic yet simple attitude, holds a book in one hand, and with the other seems to bless the country lying at his feet, and which is under his protection.

One can climb up to the head of this colossus, which is of wrought and cast-iron, by a stairway, contrived in the body of masonry with which the interior is filled. This gigantic statue, which emerges little by little from the woods with which it is surrounded, and ends by dominating the horizon like a solitary watcher, produces a singular effect.

Arona, where we stop for breakfast, has a thoroughly Spanish air. The houses have projecting roofs and balconies, bars at the lower windows, and Madonnas on the walls.

The church, which we did not have time to visit, contains some fine paintings of Gaudenzio Vinci, and reminds one of the Spanish churches. In the inn, we once more find the interior court adorned with columns and galleries, as in Andalusia, and a host of other points of similarity which impressed us.

The lake ends at Sesto-Calende, and here the Tessin hurls itself into Lake Maggiore. Sesto-Calende is on the opposite shore, and we crossed the river on a ferry-boat, as the road to Milan passes through that little town. While our carriage was being put on board the narrow boat, a little, fantastic, grimacing old man, with head bowed and fingers making extravagant shifts, played upon a violin, which was not a Cremona, despite the neighborhood, a popular air with a melody which was at the same time joyous and melancholy. Encouraged by a small coin, he continued playing the entire time occupied by the crossing, and thus we entered Sesto-Calende to the sound of music, a very imposing entr  e.

Sesto-Calende pleased us greatly. It was market day, a favorable circumstance for the traveler; for a market brings from the depths of the country a crowd of characteristic peasants whom it would be otherwise difficult to see.

The majority of the women had an original coiffure which was of a charming effect; the hair plaited and coiled carefully about the nape of the neck, is fastened by thirty or forty silver pins, arranged in the form of an aureole, which has the same effect as the teeth of a comb; a larger pin adorned at both its ends with enormous olives made of metal and passed through the hair, which is twisted behind, completes this ornamentation,

which reminded us of the women of Valencia. These pins, called *spontoni*, are expensive, and yet we have seen poor women and young girls with bare and dusty feet wearing this head-dress; they are doubtless compelled to sacrifice to this luxury articles of the utmost necessity.

But is not the first necessity for a woman to make herself beautiful, and are not silver pins of more importance than shoes? We were so charmed not to see on their heads those horrid cotton handkerchiefs, such as they had a right to wear according to the prevailing fashion, that we could have embraced them for pure love of the costume; pretty girls know a thing or two.

The men, although very badly clothed, did not wear blouses, a refinement which pleased us and compensated for the deep grief we experienced in unexpectedly encountering this hideous garment in the province of Guipuscoa, where we went last year on our way to the races at Bilbao.

The tiled, overhanging roofs, the whitewashed walls, the windows with a network of iron gratings, make Sesto-Calende much more like Irun or Fontarabia than we could have believed possible; the baskets filled with watermelons, pumpkins, or tomatoes have an aspect which is altogether Southern. The annual painting of the walls of the houses has respected the frescoes, some of which are quite ancient, and which represent pious subjects. One of these paintings which met our eyes in coming off the ferry-boat of the Tessin, is a Madonna carrying the infant Jesus in her arms. An inscription, which we copied, gave the date of it: "*Hoc opus fecit fieri Antonius Varallus, XIII Mars. 1564.*" We noticed, also, on the apse of the church a Christ in a skirt, like the Christ of Burgos.

The Austrian domination begins at Sesto-Calende. The other shore of the lake is Piedmontese. It was at Sesto-Calende that we encountered, for the first time, the

tight blue pantaloons and the white tunic of the Hungarians, a uniform numerous examples of which will be found in the Lombard-Venetian realm which we are about to visit.

Our stage-coach was visited but very perfunctorily, and without the annoyances which we were anticipating, according to the stories of travelers. Our passports were first asked for and were very politely returned to us after a few moments waiting in a hall decorated with maps and views of Venice, the window of which opened on a court filled with half-plucked chickens of a pitiable and ferocious expression, which was most laughable. These miserable fowls, prepared for the spit, strolled gravely about with two feathers in the rear. In spite of this civility in regard to formalities on the part of the officials, we are obliged to state that our description had already arrived from Paris and had been copied in all the registers; yet we had traveled rapidly, having stopped only a single day at Geneva.

We cannot leave Sesto-Calende without giving a portrait of a young girl who was standing at the door of a shop. The obscure interior made a warm and vigorous background from which she stood out like one of Giorgione's heads. Through her, we salute Southern beauty in its present type. Her black eyes shone like coals under her forehead, in the midst of a dull pallor. She had that tint of a single tone, that *faccia smorta* which has nothing of the sickly about it, and which shows that passion has concentrated all the blood about the heart. Her thick, dark, glossy hair, crinkled in little waves, stirred upon her temples as if ruffled by the wind, and her neck was attached to her shoulders by a powerful and simple line. She tranquilly allowed us to regard her without savagery or coquetry, imagining us either a painter or poet, perhaps both, making for us the allowance due to either one of those professions.

The Austrian postilion has a costume which is quite picturesque, — the green coat with the yellow and black aiglet, the heavy boots, the hat circled with leather, and, at his side, that hunting horn with which the melodies of Schubert are so much concerned. It is worthy of notice that the postilion, who in all countries drives civilization *en poste*, since civilization and circulation are, so to speak, synonymous, is one of the last to remain faithful to the local color. He drives the English in mackintosh and waterproof, and preserves his motley and characteristic livery. It is the past leading the future when he cracks his whip.

From Sesto-Calende to Milan the road is bordered by vineyards and plantations of trees of the most luxuriant and vigorous vegetation. The branches prevent an extended view, and one advances between two walls of verdure bathed by streams of running water.

At Soma there is a church with a very beautiful façade, and in this church are some frescoes of a very soft and pleasant tone, although of that style which marks the decadence of art. As for ourselves, accustomed as we are to the rancidity of oil painting, this species of flowery fresco has a charm which is altogether new. One frequently meets Austrian soldiers coming and going on this road, either in little groups or isolated, or in artillery wagons. They have a mild, sad air, and seem afflicted with home-sickness. In spite of their reserved bearing, they produce, even upon a stranger, a disagreeable effect; it is sad to see the beak of the Austrian eagle in the side of this beautiful country, and yet the conquerors do not affect a triumphant or haughty carriage; one might even say that they seek to dissimulate and make themselves as inconspicuous as possible; but the German phlegm is incompatible with the Italian vivacity; it is a question of racial antipathy as well as of patriotism.

Gallarate and Rho take you to Milan in two relays. A magnificent alley of trees announces that we are approaching the city, which presents itself very majestically from this side. A triumphal arch, much grander than that of the Carrousel, and which might vie in magnificence with that of *L'Etoile*, gives to this entrance a monumental character which the rest does not disparage. On the top of the arch an allegorical figure, Peace or Victory, drives a car of bronze drawn by six horses. At each corner of the structure knights holding crowns make their brazen horses paw the ground; two colossal figures of river-gods leaning on their urns, bend over the gigantic ship which contains the votive inscription, and four groups of two Corinthian columns mark the divisions of the monument, support the cornice and separate the arcades, which are three in number; that in the middle is of a prodigious height. This gate passed, we cross the Place d'Armes, which appeared to us to be almost as large as the Champ de Mars. On the left looms up an immense amphitheatre, designed for manœuvres or performances in the open air; in the background rises the old castle, and further off the white silhouette of the dome cuts the blue sky like silver filigree work, and has nothing whatever of the contour of a cupola; but *dome*, in Italy, is a generic term, and does not imply the idea of cupola.

From what one encounters in the streets, from the height of the buildings, the movement of the people, the cleanliness, the general air of comfortableness, from the numerous carriages running along the flagged strips, — a sort of stone railway inserted in the pavement constructed of pebbles, — one feels that one is in a living capital, a rare thing in Italy, where there are so many dead cities. The houses have the air of hotels, the hotels the appearance of palaces, and the palaces, of temples; all is large, regular, majestic, a little emphatic even;

one sees only columns, architraves and balconies of granite.

It is something between Madrid and Versailles, with a cleanness which Madrid has not; this Spanish resemblance of which we have already spoken strikes us at every step and we cannot refrain from returning to it, since no one, so far as we know, has ever before remarked it. From the window of the large stores hang white and yellow stripes; the shops have curtains of the same color, which made us think of Tendidos.

The women of the middle class, or those not in full toilette, wear the *mezzaro*, a kind of black veil which might be mistaken for the mantilla; the illusion would be almost complete, if the Austrians did not come to destroy it.

We were told to descend, at the *Corsia di Servi*, at the *Hôtel de la Ville*, the best in Milan, and which merits its reputation. This inn is a palace which could accommodate more than one prince with his retinue. We have seen, in the course of our travels, crowned heads who were assuredly less handsomely lodged. Its façade is a bit of very commendable architecture, adorned with pilasters, brackets, busts of the great men of Italy, painters, poets, historians, warriors; the staircase, worthy of a royal residence, is covered from top to bottom with marbles, stuccoes, and paintings of unheard-of richness and astonishing execution; the ceiling, also, is remarkable; it represents different mythological subjects, with cameos, bas-reliefs, balustrades, and flowers of a brilliancy of tone that would be the envy of Diaz. All the rooms are decorated with the same care and the same taste; here are some gauntlets, two or three masks and some emblems in the style of Pompeii; here, some rock-work ornaments, very exquisite, or some cameos or enamel of Limoges, imitated so as to deceive the eye, or tapestries which shimmer like silk and as soft as velvet, cof-

fers, rose-work, arabesques inexpressibly fanciful and very strangely embossed.

The smallest corridors have their magnificences and their interest. As to the dining-room it is of a superlative elegance. Eight colossal caryatides of alternate sex watch you while you are taking your repast and intimidate you with their eyes fixed in a glassy stare. They support a ceiling divided into compartments of an extravagant richness. Then there are festoons, hangings, imitations of precious stones and gilding more brilliant than the genuine. These paintings, of which one has no idea in France, were done by a certain decorator named Alphonso, who died two or three years ago. This is all we have been able to ascertain concerning him. We have described this hotel in detail. It will serve to furnish an idea of the elegance of Milan. We remained there two days, admirably lodged, fed, and served for a very reasonable charge.

It is so much the custom for travelers to tell lies about their hosts and the hostelries at which they stop that we have here endeavored to render this superb establishment the justice which it merits. We shall have quite enough descriptions of an altogether different character to make a contrast.





## CHAPTER V

### MILAN—THE DOME—THE OPEN-AIR THEATRE

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THE Dome is naturally the first thought of every traveler who arrives in Milan. It dominates the city; it is the centre of it, its attraction and its wonder. Thither one runs at once, even upon a night when there is no moon, in order at least to catch some profile of it.

The *Piazza Del Duomo*, quite irregular in its form, is bordered by houses of which it is the custom to speak ill.

There is no travelers' guide which does not demand that they be razed to the ground in order to make a grand symmetrical Place in the Rivoli style. We are not of that opinion. These houses, with their massive pillars, their saffron-colored awnings, without order and of unequal height, form a very good set-off for the cathedral. Buildings often lose more than they gain by being unobstructed.

One can be convinced of this fact by referring to several Gothic monuments to which covered stalls and huts were glued, and which were believed to be innocuous. This is not, however, the case with the Dome, which is entirely isolated; but we think that nothing is more advantageous for a palace, a church, and all symmetrical edifices than that they should be surrounded by incoherent constructions which serve to set off their noble regularity.

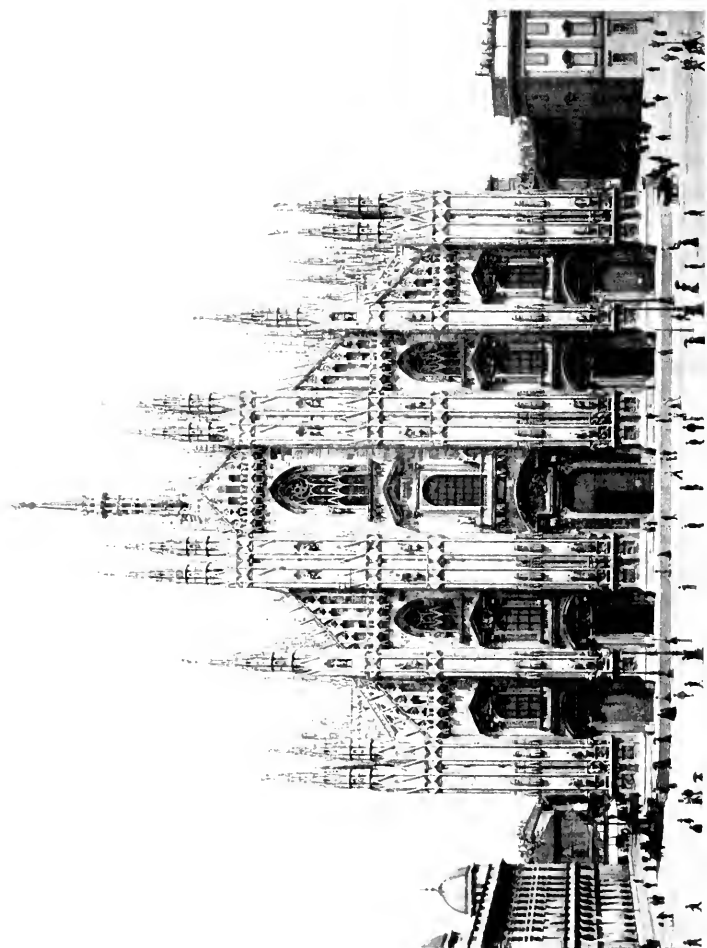
When one looks at the Dome from the Place, the first effect is dazzling; the whiteness of the marble, not

harmonizing with the blue of the sky, strikes you all at once ; it might be considered as an immense guipure of silver standing upon a ground of *lapis lazuli*. That is the first impression conveyed by it, and it is also the last memory which the mind retains of it. When we think of the Dome of Milan in days to come, that is how it will appear to us. The Dome is one of the few Gothic churches of Italy, but this Gothic little resembles ours. There is not that idea of sombre faith, of disquieting mystery, of shadowy depth, of emaciated features, of leaping from the earth toward the sky, that character of austerity which repudiates beauty as being too sensuous and which only takes from matter what is absolutely necessary for an advance toward God ; it is a Gothic full of elegance, of grace and of splendor, which might be dreamed of in connection with fairy palaces and in accordance with which alcazars and mosques could be built as well as a Catholic temple.

The delicacy which is still apparent, in spite of the hugeness and whiteness, gives it the air of a glacier with its thousand needles, or of a gigantic aggregation of stalactites. One can with difficulty believe it to be a work performed by the hand of man.

The design of the façade is very simple ; its angles are as acute as the gables of an ordinary house, and are bordered by a lacework of marble, carrying on a wall, without forepart, without architectural order, pierced by five doors and eight windows and striped by six groups of spindle-shaped columns, or rather ribs, terminating in hollowed points which are surmounted by statues, and the interstices of which are filled with corbels and niches sheltering figures of angels, saints and patriarchs. From behind burst forth in innumerable rockets, like the shafts of a basaltic grotto, forests of bell turrets, of pinnales, of minarets, of white marble, and the central spire, which seems an icicle crystallized in the air,







*MILAN*

*The Cathedral Front. (By Marco Frisone da Campione ?)*

launches itself into the azure to a frightful height, and carries a Virgin who stands erect on its top, her foot on a crescent to within two steps of Heaven. On the middle of this façade are written these words: "*Mariæ nascenti*," which constitute the dedication of the Cathedral.

Begun by Jean Galeas Visconti, continued by Ludovic le More, the basilica of Milan was finished by Napoleon. It is the largest church in the world except St. Peter's in Rome. Its interior is of a majestic and noble simplicity. Rows of joined columns form five naves. These groups of columns, in spite of their actual massiveness, have a certain airiness on account of the slenderness of their shafts. Above the tops of their pillars they support a sort of windowed gallery where statues of saints are lodged, since the ribs are continued and meet again at the summit of the arch, adorned with trefoil and Gothic wreaths, painted with so great perfection as to deceive all eyes, if the rough coating which has fallen did not permit the naked stone to be seen.

At the centre of the cross, an opening surrounded by a balustrade allows one to plunge into the cryptic chapel, where Saint Charles Borromeo reposes in a coffin of crystal covered with silver plate. Saint Charles Borromeo is the saint who is most revered in this country. His virtues, his conduct during the plague at Milan, have made him popular, and his memory is perpetuated.

At the entrance to the choir, on a bay which supports a crucifix, surrounded by adoring angels, may be read on a framework of wood the following inscription: "*Attendite ad petram unde excisi estis*." On each side two magnificent pulpits wrought of similar metal rise, supported by superb figures of bronze and covered with plaques containing bas-reliefs of silver, the material of which is the least factor in its value. The organs, placed not far from the pulpits, have for doors large pictures by Proca-

cini, if our memory is not in default; around the choir runs a *Chemin de la Croix*, sculptured by Andre Biffi and some other Milanese sculptors like him. The weeping angels, who mark the stations, have a great variety of attitudes, and are charming, although of a grace which is slightly effeminate.

The general impression is simple and religious; a soft light invites to meditation; the great pillars mount up to the vault with a shoot full of courage and of faith. Each apparent detail does not succeed in destroying the majesty of the whole. There is no overloading, no superfluity of luxury; the lines can be followed from one end to the other, and the design of the building understood at a glance.

From the outside this superb elegance seems to veil itself in mystery and humble itself; the swelling hymn of marble lowers the voice a little and moderates its burst of sound; the exterior, by force of its slenderness and whiteness, is perhaps Pagan, but the interior is certainly Christian.

The sacristy contains a treasure which ought not to surprise us who have seen the wardrobe of Notre-Dame of Toledo, in which a single robe, covered with white and black pearls, is worth seven million francs, and yet that of Milan is fully as valuable. We will notice first, because art always takes precedence of gold and silver, a beautiful *Christ a la colonne*, by Christoforo Gobi, a Milanese, and a painting of Daniel Crespi, representing a miracle of Saint Charles Borromeo, a work of great force and a grand power of expression; next, we will mention the silver busts of the bishops, of Saint Sebastian and of Saint Thekla, the patroness of the parish, all strewn with flaming rubies and topazes; a cross of gold, starred with sapphires, garnets, gleaming topazes, and rock-crystals; a magnificent gospel dating from 1068, given by the Archbishop Ribertus, all of gold, and bearing on its cover,



chiseled in Byzantine style, a Christ in a skirt accompanied by four symbolical figures, — the lion, the ox, the eagle and the angel; a vessel for holy water of ivory, worked in most delicate fashion, and furnished with handles of vermilion, representing chimeras; a ciborium of Benvenuto Cellini, and paintings on silk by Ludovico Pellegrini.

In a corner of the nave, before mounting to the Dome, we glance at a historic tomb with allegorical figures cast in bronze by the cavalier Aretin, from designs by Michael Angelo, of a powerful and superb style. We reach the roof of the church by ascending a staircase furnished at all its turns with preventive or threatening inscriptions, which do not speak well for the piety or cleanliness of the Italians.

This roof, all bristling with towers and arched buttresses which form corridors in perspective, is made of large blocks of marble like the rest of the edifice. The roof itself rises well above most of the structures of the city. A bas-relief of the finest execution is enclosed in each arched buttress; each tower contains twenty-five statues. We do not believe that any spot in the world contains so large a number of sculptured figures. A city with a large population of marble could be made out of the statues of the Dome, — 6,760 can be counted. We have heard of a church in Morea, painted in the Byzantine fashion, by the monks of Mt. Athos, and which contains not less than three thousand figures, large and small; but that is a small thing alongside the Milan Cathedral.

Apropos of the personages painted or sculptured, we often had the idea, though never invested with the power, of bringing to life all these figures created by art in granite, in stone, on wood and cloth, and with them filling a country whose location should be the background of certain pictures made real. The sculptured

multitudes of the Dome bring back this fancy to our brain. Among these statues there is one by Canova, a Saint Sebastian lodged in a turret and an Eve by Cristoforo Gobi, of a charming and sensuous grace, which one is surprised to find in such a place. However, she is very beautiful, and the birds of the air seem in no wise scandalized by her Paradisiac vestiture.

From this platform an immense panorama is unfolded. At the same time can be seen the Alps and the Apennines, the vast plains of Lombardy, and with a field glass one can regulate his watch by the dial of the Church of Monza, the black and white strata of which can be readily distinguished.

It is at Monza that the famous iron crown of Napoleon is preserved, which he placed on his head when being crowned King of Italy, saying "God gives it to me, beware who touches it." This crown is of gold and precious stones, like all crowns, and owes its name to a small ring of iron which fastens it, and which is alleged to have been made from a nail of the true cross, which makes it a treasure and a relic. Special permission must be obtained in order to view it, since it has acquired a new value in touching that august forehead; but a perfectly correct copy of it is shown. The guide told us all this at the foot of a tower, and in French, which made us prefer his Italian. He calls us continually "Monsieur, the chevalier," on account of a small red ribbon in our buttonhole, hoping doubtless to extract a larger "tip" by means of this flattering title. It was the first time we had been the recipient of this distinction, and that at four hundred steps above the pavement! What an honor!

The ascent of the hollowed and perforated spire by day has nothing of the perilous about it, however it may alarm people subject to vertigo. Frail staircases wind upward in the towers, and conduct you to a bal-

cony above which there is only the apex of the spire and the statue which crowns the edifice.

We will not endeavor to describe more in detail this gigantic basilica. It would need a volume for its monograph. A simple artist, we content ourselves with a general survey and a personal impression. When one redescends to the street, and makes the tour of the church, one finds on the side façades and the apses the same crowd of statues, the same aggregation of bas-reliefs; it is a debauch of sculptures and an incredible aggregation of marvels. In the vicinity of the cathedral all kinds of small industries prosper,—the small shopkeepers, opticians, and even a theatre of marionettes, whose performances we promise ourselves not to miss. Human life with its trivialities swarms and bustles at the base of the majestic building; everywhere visible the same contrast between the sublimity of the ideal and the grossness of the real. The temple of the Saviour furnishes shade for the booth of Polichinello.

Our method in traveling is to wander at hazard about the streets, reckoning on the happiness of chance meetings. In the *Rue des Omenoni*, our lucky star permitted us to encounter a façade which had charmed our friend August Préault; the entablature crushes with its weight six enormous caryatides in the style of Michael Angelo and Puget, and which are rendered still more flamboyant by the exaggerations of decadence. Picture to yourself the most swelling muscles, the most Herculean interlacing of nerves, the most knotted torsos, the most athletic chests possible to your imagination, and still you will not attain to the reality. As to the heads, they are uncouth, bristling, savage, rolling sinister eyes under eyebrows like brushwood, and seeming to utter words of revolt under their dishevelled beards. Each of these figures bears the name of a vanquished barbar-

ous people. We suggest to romantic sculptors passing through Milan a visit to No. 1722 *Rue degli Omenoni*.

In Milan almost all the shops bear on their signs this notice "Ancient house of ———," "Ancient hostelry of ———," "Ancient café of ———." At home we put it "New store," "new café." The wine shops instead of being daubed with red, as in France, are indicated by crowns of vine branches and grapes with a pretty effect. The vendors of watermelons arrange their stands also very agreeably. The cut melons allow their rose-colored pulps to be seen, on which a stream of water fine as a hair is played, or else the fruit, extracted from its skin, is cut in the form of columns surmounted by a small piece of ice for a capital. There is nothing more attractive to the eye than this mixture of green rind and vermilion slices. The watermelon is not at all like our melons. The interior is filled with a sort of snowy pith of a rosy tint, from which flows a fresh and sugary water. Although quite agreeable in warm weather, the watermelon is devoured by the eyes as well as by the mouth; it attracts the taste by means of the sight. A slice sells for a few centimes and is the delight of the little people.

Strolling about, we read the notices of the booksellers and noticed the titles of the works exposed for sale. We were very much surprised to encounter the political works of Lamartine, of Louis Blanc, the *Mémoires de Cuussidière*, the fifty-two small volumes of M. Emile de Girardin, and a host of treatises upon matters which we should have supposed would be forbidden here. We will also mention that works on political economy, statistics, and other analogous subjects outnumber those of general literature and poetry.

Even Alexander Dumas is to be found, and what is more strange, the socialist romances of Eugene Sue, the "Mysteries of Paris," and the "Wandering Jew." Not

to leave any doubt as to the tolerance of the police in this respect, a large handbill at all the corners of the streets announced at the open-air theatre in the public gardens an extraordinary performance: "The punishment and death of Rodin by cholera, an episode of the 'Wandering Jew.'" A painting containing portraits of savage women and boa-constrictors showed the wretched subject in the throes of convulsions, and making (as an attraction) frightful grimaces. We could not miss such a spectacle. Moreover, La Scala was closed, and the minor theatres were not playing that day.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE "LAST SUPPER"—BRESCIA— VERONA

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THE open-air theatre, which also serves for a circus, since horses and hippie attributes play a large part in its ornamentation, has no ceiling; the blue sky takes the place of one. It is composed of a parterre which merits its name literally, and of galleries divided into boxes, but without partitions and open at the back.

It was about half-past five and the play began *sub jove crudo*; but soon the shadows fall, then the night comes. First a candle is discreetly lighted to lighten the actor in his play; meanwhile, the balance of the theatre was plunged in darkness, like the danseuses of Algeria, who, making little account of the illumination of the hall in which they display their graces, keep a negro holding a candle near them, who appropriately elevates or lowers it, illuminating eyes, bust or feet following the progress of the dance. Finally, a timid light joined itself to the first; then a row of footlights started up. Some argand lamps were lit, and the day theatre was transformed into a nocturnal one, badly lighted. It must be remembered that the hall had only the stars for chandeliers.

The actors were not very bad. Unfortunately, Mlle. de Cardoville was withered, lean and dark-skinned, and made us long for the blonde and vivacious Alphonsine of the *Délassements-Comiques*. The two young girls, although they were more pleasing, did not justify the supervision of Dagobert, but Prince Djalma was thor-









*LEONARDO DA VINCI*  
*The Last Supper (copy)*

oughly accomplished; we do not believe it would be possible to realize a character more exactly. Never was a head of more thoroughly Indian type, nor an eye so filled with flames seen to roll under a blue eyebrow and a white turban; the arched and slender nose, the even jaws, the red mouth, the gold-colored complexion might have represented Rama departing for his conquest of the island of Ceylon. He walked rapidly upon the stage in his white vestment relieved by red trimmings which seemed like streams of blood, with the motions of a young tiger, now languishing, now fierce. Rodin, who is the scapegoat of the piece, has, except for a hat with an immense rim, the perfect physiognomy of Basil of Beaumarchais, with a slight hint of Tartufe in addition; his coat is black, his breeches short, his shoes and stockings denote the priest perfectly; the actor, to please the public, was given all the ugliness that can be obtained by the use of charcoal, ochre and bitumen; he was truly hideous, with his low forehead, sunken eyes, livid jaws and bluish beard extending as far as the cheek bones; the blue cholera, on its quitting the plague-stricken peninsula of the Ganges, could not have a more cadaverous and frightful countenance. At each contortion, as suffering racked him, when tormented by the terrible malady, there was applause and frenzied stamping of feet.

The foyer, where one may smoke, is in the open air; the actors, who have no dressing-room, dress themselves pell-mell behind the scenes, in a sort of wooden hut, very much as is done at the Hippodrome in Paris.

Having returned to the hotel, as we were looking at an engraving of the *Cène* by Leonardo da Vinci, the original of which we believed to be no longer in existence, we were told that it was still extant and could be seen in a convent transformed into an Austrian barracks, near *Saint Marie des Graces*.

The next day our first visit was to this church, a charming edifice, all of brick, which the rough-coating, fallen away in many places, permitted to be seen and looking like vermilion flesh. It is that which gives to the structure, although dilapidated, a rose and white aspect, a vivacious and youthful air; the side chapels are adorned with frescoes representing tortures; on the door of one of these chapels are inserted two bronze medallions of the Virgin and of Christ, of an impressive expression and very delicate workmanship; the low vaults, the incrustations of marble, the mirrors and crystals with which they are decorated are entirely in the Spanish style, and we saw one very similar to these in the convent of San Domingo at Grenada.

In leaving the church by the sacristy, the ceiling of which is blue and strewn with golden stars, we passed out into the cloister of the ancient convent. War inhabits the old asylum of peace; soldiers, those violent monks, have replaced the monks, those peaceable soldiers; the barracks always fit easily into the monastery; the regiments and the communities, those solitary multitudes, resemble each other in one respect—the absence of family. The pavement of the long arcades, disturbed in former times by the monotonous patter of sandals, resound to-day under the butts of muskets; the drum beats where the bell tolled; the oath bursts forth where the prayer was murmured; military life, with its brutality, spreads through the courts; here is a shirt hung out to dry; there a pair of pantaloons frisking in the wind; everywhere, open chests, racks of arms; platters and food, the disciplined disorder of the camp. Along the walls, scarred by the weather, the carelessness or impious grossness of the soldiery, some paintings can be discerned representing the miracles of the founder of the order, always engaged in baffling the temptations of the devil, who appeared to him sometimes under the

form of a cat, sometimes disguised as a monkey, or, more subtly, under the aspect of a beautiful woman. The Last Supper of Leonardo da Vinci occupies the wall at the end of the refectory. The other wall is covered by a Calvary by Montorfanos, dated 1495. There is some talent in this painting. But who can hold his own in the face of Leonardo da Vinci?

Certainly the state of degradation into which this masterpiece of human genius has fallen is regrettable; but it is less injured than one could believe possible. Leonardo da Vinci is, *par excellence*, the painter of the mysterious, the ineffable, the crepuscular. His painting has the air of music in a minor key. His shadows are veils that he half removes, or that he thickens in order to make you divine a secret thought; his tones are deadened like the colors of objects in the moonlight, and time, which is hateful to other painters, aids him by strengthening the harmonious shadows in which he loves to plunge himself.

The first impression made by that marvelous fresco is in the nature of a dream. All trace of art has disappeared; it seems to float on the surface of the wall, which absorbs it as a light vapor. It is the ghost of a painting, the spectre of a masterpiece returned to earth. The effect perhaps is more solemn and more religious even than if the picture was alive; the body has disappeared, but the soul survives in its entirety.

Christ occupies the middle of the table, having on His right Saint John, the beloved apostle; Saint John in an attitude of adoration, with gentle and attentive eye, mouth half open, with calm visage, bending down respectfully but affectionately, suggests the heart leaning upon the Divine Master. Leonardo has given the apostles rude, strongly accentuated features: since the apostles were all fishermen, workers with their hands and belonging to the people. They denote, by the energy of their

features, by the strength of their muscles, that they are the growing Church. John, with his feminine figure, his pure features, his flesh-color of a fine and delicate tone, seems to have about him much more of the angel than the man: he is more aerial than terrestrial; more poetic than dogmatic; more loving than believing; he symbolizes the passage of the human nature to the divine. Christ bears stamped on His visage the ineffable mildness of the voluntary victim, the azure of Paradise shines in His eyes, and words of peace and consolation fall from His lips like the celestial manna in the desert. The tender blue of His eye-balls and the pale tint of His skin, a reflection of which seems to have colored the Charles I of Van Dyck, reveal the sufferings of the interior cross borne with a satisfied resignation. He resolutely accepts His death and does not turn away from the sponge of vinegar in that last repast. One recognizes a moral hero whose soul is his strength, in this figure of an incomparable sweetness; the carriage of the head, the delicacy of the skin, the pure pose of the fingers, all denote an aristocratic nature in the midst of the plebeian and rustic faces of his companions—Jesus Christ is the Son of God, but He is also of the race of the kings of Judah. Was not such a revealer, mild, gentle, and one whom little children could approach fearlessly, necessary to a religion which is wholly spiritual?

In place of Jesus, put Socrates in that last scene and its character will change immediately: the one will demand that a cock be sacrificed to Esculapius; the other will offer himself for a hostage, and the beauty of Greek art will here be vanquished by Christian art.

We had expected to remain longer in Milan, to visit the sixteen antique columns of Saint Lawrence, the great hospital, the palace of Belgiojoso, several rich or beautiful churches; but we make it a principle to seek for nothing more after experiencing a great emotion, and









# VERONA

*The Roman Amphitheatre*

nothing could surpass the Last Supper of Leonardo da Vinci; besides Venice drew us irresistibly on.

The railway took us as far as Treviglio. Continuing by stage-coach we passed Brescia in the night, stopping there an hour. Of Brescia we can say nothing except that the houses vaguely outlined in the shadows seemed to us extremely lofty and that the water of a fountain, to which one mounts by several steps, gave us great pleasure by its coolness. We drank several draughts of it while the horses were being changed.

In the brightly-lighted porch of the inn was hung an announcement of a play. Two ballets were announced for the next market day, "*Alcine*" and "*Giselle*," by Mlle. Augusta Maywood, American dancer, who made some leaps on the boards of the Opera several years ago. The Brescians rose in our estimation from that moment, and the superiority of the pantomime, intelligible in all languages, was still further demonstrated to us.

From Brescia to Verona we have nothing remarkable to mention except a view of the Lake of Garda, near Peschiera; for, like the Homeric gods, we traveled in a cloud, but in a cloud of dust.

Verona, the name of which cannot be spoken without recalling Romeo and Juliet, — two real beings, — presents itself to the eye of the traveler in a quite picturesque fashion. One follows for some time the Adige, which is crossed by a large, peculiar bridge of brick, with inordinate arches, parapets fringed with Moorish battlements, like the walls of Seville, and stairs which prevent carriages from passing over it. A beautiful antique gate made of two rows of columns with arches above them, majestically receives the travelers.

The Capulets and Montagues could still fight in the streets of Verona, and Tybalt might slay Mercutio there. The scenery has not been changed. Shakespeare's tragedy is wonderfully true to life. At Verona, as in a

Spanish city, there is no house without its balcony, and the rope-ladder need only to be selected. Few cities have better preserved the stamp of the Middle Ages: the pointed arcades, trefoiled windows, the carved balconies, the pillared houses, sculptured street corners, the great mansions with bronze knockers, with wrought bars, in which the entablature crowned with statues is blazoned with architectural details which the pencil alone can furnish, carry you back to past times, and one is greatly surprised to see people walking the streets in modern dress, and Austrian Uhlands. This effect is especially perceptible in the *Place du Marché*, encumbered with watermelons, lemons, and tomatoes. The houses decorated with frescoes by Paolo Albasini, with the sculptured ornamentations and robust pillars, have a most romantic appearance; columns with complicated capitals succeed in making this place a marvelous *motif* for the water-colorists and the decorators. It is the most animated spot in the city. The women are to be seen only at the windows and doors, and the crowd swarms about the stands of the tradesmen.

Between the apocryphal tomb of Juliet,—a sort of vault half-buried in a garden,—the tombstones in the open *Rue des Scaligers*, and the ancient amphitheatre, we chose, not having time to visit all, the Roman Arena, which is even better preserved than the Circus of Arles.

The exterior enclosure only is wanting to this Arena, five or six arches of which remaining intact make the restoration of the remainder a very easy matter; a few weeks of repair work would permit the bloody games of the Circus to be recommenced there. While mounting and descending the steps, which are as well preserved as though hewn yesterday, we said to ourselves, “What an admirable place for bull fights this would be; what an opportunity for the bulls of Veragua is afforded by this

arena which has drunk the blood of lions and of gladiators !”

The cages of the ferocious animals can be recognized ; the entrances and exits for the actors, the outlets for the people ; the sink for the draining of the water after the naval battles is perfectly distinguishable ; only the public lying in the dust of Josaphat is wanting. As though it had been desired to mark the scale of modern mediocrity as compared with ancient magnificence, a theatre of wood has been erected in the interior of the Arena, which covers only a few rows of seats ; twenty-two thousand persons could be seated with ease in the Roman amphitheatre.

Returning to the railway station which connects Verona with Venice, we noticed a movement of troops, a beating of drums, and many people going in the same direction ; we were told that seven brigands were about to be shot and that the evening before five had been put to death.

If time had not been wanting, we should have gone to witness this execution, from which, in our own country, we should have fled. For in traveling, curiosity sometimes amounts to barbarity, and the eyes seeking for novelty do not even turn away from an execution if the executioner is picturesque and the culprit is of an interesting local color.

Happily the whistle of the locomotive caused us to give up this cruel notion, and we seated ourselves in the railway carriage divided from one extremity to the other by a corridor, and in which two venerable Capuchins had already taken their places, the first monks we had seen.

It was six o'clock ; at half-past eight we were due to arrive in Venice.



## CHAPTER VII

### VENICE

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**W**E are somewhat ashamed of the Italian sky, which in Paris one fancies to be of an unalterable blue, when obliged to confess that on our departure from Verona great black clouds encumbered the horizon. It is sad to begin a journey to the land of sunny skies with descriptions of storms, but truth compels us to confess that the rain fell in heavy down-pours, first in the distance and then on the plain across which the railroad was about to carry us.

Mountains crowned with clouds, hills enlivened by chateaux and pleasure houses, formed the background of the picture. The foreground was composed of cultivated land, very green, very diversified and very picturesque. The vine in Italy is not planted as it is in France; it is made to ascend and climb up on trellises which it festoons with its foliage. Nothing is more pleasing to the eye than the long rows of trees, which, bound together by their arms of vine branches, have the air of giving their hands and dancing around the fields a great farandole. They might be called a choir of vegetable Bacchantes who, in a silent transport, are celebrating the ancient festival of Lyaeus. These riotous vines, running from branch to branch, give an unimaginable elegance to the landscape. From distance to distance, the open farm-houses permit a view of laborers under the porticoes taking their evening meal and giving life to the picture.

Let us note here some peculiarities of the Italian railway. On the milestones which mark the distance traveled, are also noted the declination or elevation of

the ground. Signals are given by means of baskets of a peculiar construction, which are hoisted on long poles to convenient heights. The railway is a simple affair with only a single track. To the stations, which are quite numerous, come vendors of pastry, lemonade, and coffee which must be gulped down boiling hot, for you have no more than touched the cup to your lips when the strident shriek of the whistle is heard, and the convoy is again on the march. The railway grazes Vicenza, and presently arrives at Padua, of which we can say nothing but the phrase which is indicative of the decoration of Angelo "On the horizon, the silhouette of the Padua of the Middle Ages." A tower and some bell-turrets of pale tint, detaching themselves by their blackness from a background of sky, were all that we were able to distinguish; but we recompensed ourselves later. The weather still refused to become reconciled; gusts of wind, heavy deluges of rain, flashes of lightning, pursued the train in its flight; it became almost cold, and the good old cloak which has performed such loyal services for us in Spain, in Africa, in England, in Holland and on the borders of the Rhine, now offered us very conveniently the shelter of its vast girth and big sleeves. Although the locomotive was drawing us with great rapidity, it seemed to us, so great was our impatience, that we were traveling in one of those cars drawn by snails, such as one sees in the arabesques of Raphael. Every man, whether he be a poet or not, chooses for himself one or two cities as ideal habitations, which he peoples in his dreams, in which he fancies for himself the palaces, streets, houses, the general appearance of things according to an interior architecture, somewhat as Piranese pleased himself by building chimerical structures with his point of aquafortis, but which are endowed with a powerful and mysterious reality. What lays the foundation of that imaginary city? It would

be difficult to say. The narratives, the engravings, the sight of a map, sometimes the euphony or the singularity of a name, a story read while one was very young,—the least peculiarity ; all contribute to it, each adds its share to the building. As for us, three cities have always enchainèd our attention : Grenada, Venice, and Cairo. We have been able to compare the real Grenada with our Grenada, and to make our camp-bed in the Alhambra ; but life is so badly arranged ; time slips away so awkwardly that as yet we know Venice only by that image traced in the dark chambers of the brain, an image often so fixed that the object itself hardly suffices to efface it. We were more than half an hour from the real Venice, and we who had never wanted a single grain of sand to accelerate its fall in the hour-glass, so sure are we that death will come, would willingly have allowed those thirty minutes to be blotted out of our life.

As for Cairo, that is an account still to be settled ; besides, Gerard de Nerval has seen it for us.

In spite of the rain which lashed our faces, we leaned out of the window of the car in an endeavor to catch in the darkness some distant glimpse of Venice, the dim silhouette of a steeple, the flash of a light ; but the darkness was profound, the horizon impenetrable ; finally comes a certain station where people who wish to leave the train at Mestre are notified to make ready. It was at Mestre that one formerly embarked for Venice ; now the railway has rendered the gondola useless ; an immense bridge crosses the lagune and welds Venice to the mainland. Never have we experienced a stranger impression. The train entered upon the long causeway. The sky was like a cupola of basalt, streaked with tawny veins. On both sides, the lagune with its liquid black, more sombre than the darkness even, extended into the unknown. From time to time wan flashes of lightning cast their torches upon the water, which was revealed by



the sudden flames, and the train seemed to ride across empty space like the hippogriff of a nightmare, for one could distinguish neither sky, water, nor bridge. Certainly, this was not the entrance into Venice of our dreams; but it surpassed in its fantasticality all that the imagination of Martynn could have found in the way of the mysterious, the gigantic, and the formidable, for a vista of Babylon or Nineveh. The storm and the night had prepared the place which the thunder etched in lineaments of fire, and the locomotive resembled those Biblical chariots whose wheels curled up like flames and in which some prophet was caught up to the seventh heaven.

This giddy ride lasted several minutes, when the locomotive ceased its efforts and came to a stop. A large terminal station, without any architectural decoration, received the travelers, from whom passports were demanded, a card being given entitling them to their return later. The trunks were piled into a gondola-omnibus and we took up our line of march. The Hotel de l'Europe, which had been recommended to us, is at the other end of the city, a circumstance of which we were ignorant, and which afforded us the privilege of the most astonishing excursion imaginable. It was not a journey in the blue of Tieck, but it was a journey in the dark, as strange, as mysterious as those which one makes in a nightmare on the wings of the bat of Smarra.

To arrive by night in a city of which one has dreamed for long years is a very simple accident of travel, but one which seemed calculated to excite curiosity to the highest degree of exasperation. To enter the abode of one's fancy with bandaged eyes is the most irritating thing in the world. We had already discovered this at Grenada, where the stage-coach delivered us at two o'clock in the morning, in the midst of shades of the most exasperating opacity.

Our barque first followed a very wide canal, on the border of which were confusedly delineated obscure edifices punctured by a few lighted windows and a few lanterns which turned straggling beams upon the black and quivering water; then it traversed narrow lanes of water, very complicated in their turnings, or at least they seemed so on account of our ignorance of the road.

The storm, which was drawing to a close, still illumined the sky with livid lightnings which betrayed to us deep perspectives and weird embrasures of unknown palaces. Every minute we passed under bridges, both ends of which corresponded with luminous gashes in the compact and sombre mass of the houses. At every turn a night-lamp flickered before a Madonna. Strange and guttural cries sounded around the canals; a floating coffin, in the end of which a ghost was bending, flitted rapidly by our side; a low window close to the ground enabled us to see an interior lighted by a lamp, like an aquafortis of Rembrandt. Doors, whose threshold the waves licked, opened to emblematic figures which disappeared behind them; stairways bathed their steps in the canal and seemed to ascend in the shadow to mysterious Babels; the parti-colored posts to which the gondolas are attached, assumed in the face of the sombre façades the attitude of spectres.

At the top of the arches human forms vaguely watched us pass by, like the gloomy figures of a dream. Sometimes all the lights were extinguished and we advanced in sinister fashion between four species of gloom,—the oily gloom, damp and deep, of the water; the tempestuous gloom of the nocturnal sky; and the opaque gloom of the two walls, on one of which the lantern of our bark caused a reddish reflection which revealed vanishing pedestals, shafts of columns, porticoes, and bars.

All objects in this obscurity touched by any wandering ray assumed appearances which were mysterious,

fantastic, weird, and out of proportion. The water, always so formidable at night, added to the effect by its dull lapping, and its unresting life. The light of infrequent street-lamps extended in bloody trails, and the dark waves, black as those of Cocytus, seemed to spread their complaisant mantle over many a crime. We were surprised not to hear some body fall down from a balcony or from a half-opened door.

We believed ourselves to be circulating in a romance of Maturin, or of Lewis, or of Ann Radcliff, illustrated by Goya, Piranese and Rembrandt. The old stories of the Three Inquisitors, of the Council of Ten, of the Bridge of Sighs, of the masked spies, of the pitfalls and sink-holes, of the executions at the Canal Orfano — all the melodrama and romantic environment of ancient Venice returned to our memory in spite of ourselves, made still more sombre by reminiscences of the “Confessional of the Black Penitents,” and of “Abellino, or the Great Bandit.” A cold horror, damp and dark as all that surrounded us, took possession of us and we thought involuntarily of the tirade of Malipiero to Thisbe, when he depicts the fear with which Venice inspires him. This impression, which perhaps may seem exaggerated, is, however, the exact truth, and we think it would be difficult for even the most positive Philistine to avoid. We will go further and maintain that it is the true idea of Venice, the city which seems to have been established by some theatrical decorator, and for which a dramatic author seems to have arranged the customs for the greater interest of the plots and their denouements. The evening shadows restore the mystery which the day lays bare, replace the antique mask and domino upon the citizens, and give to the most simple movements of life the charm of intrigue or of crime. Each door which half opens has the air of permitting a lover or a bravo to pass. Each gondola which

glides silently by seems to carry a pair of lovers or a corpse with a stiletto in its heart.

At last our bark stops at the foot of a stairway of marble, the lower steps of which are bathed by the sea, in front of a façade which blazes at all the openings. We were at the old Palace of Giustiniani, to-day transformed into a hotel like several other Venetian palaces. A half-dozen gondolas were grouped around the door like carriages awaiting their master; a grand staircase, quite monumental, conducted us to the upper floors, each composed of a long and deep hall, with broad windows, and of side apartments looking out upon the canal and upon the land.

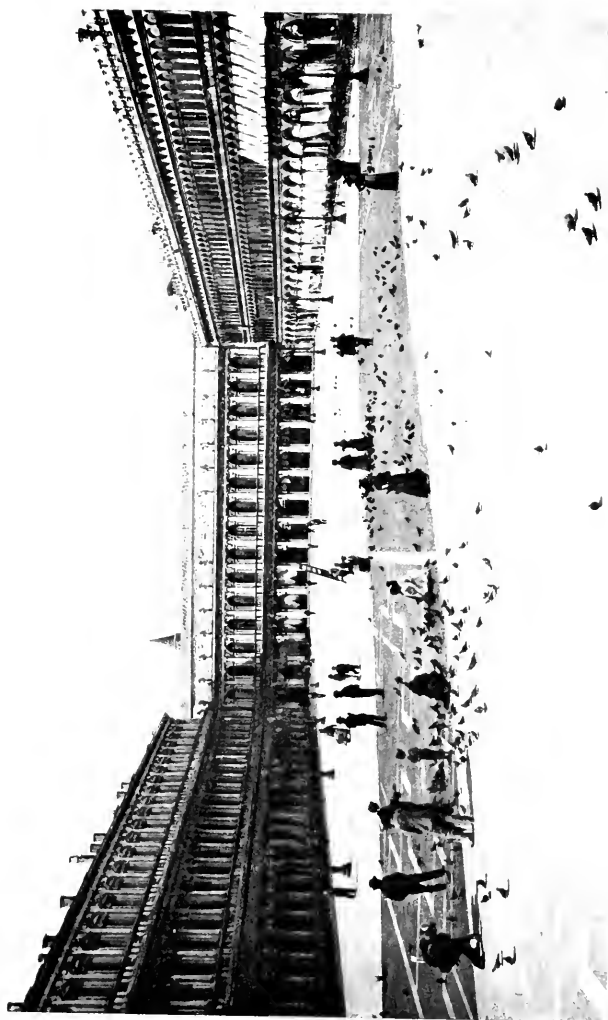
While waiting for supper to be served, we leaned upon the balcony adorned with marble columns and Moorish lancets. The rain had ceased. The clear sky was resplendent with stars, the Milky Way speckled the sombre azure with millions of tiny white drops, and numerous meteors streaked the horizon with their quick-vanishing rockets. Some brilliant points of light, stars of earth, scintillated on the other bank, which they made distinguishable; an indistinct silhouette of a dome was outlined on our right, on the other side of the water, and leaning forward a little, we discovered on our left a twinkling line of lights, which we concluded to be the lamps of the *Piazzetta*. Some little sparks like those which run along burning paper, twisted about in the black depths below us. They were the lanterns of the gondolas which were coming and going.

It was not yet late and we might have gone abroad; but we had promised ourselves to preserve intact for the morrow the first view of the Place Saint Mark. We had the resolution, therefore, not to leave our room, where we were not long in going to sleep, in spite of the stings of mosquitoes, revolving in our minds the Venice of Canaletto, of Bonnington, of Joyant, and of Wyld.

*VENICE*

.. *St. Mark's Square, with the Procuratie Vecchie and Nuove*









In the morning our first movement was to run to the balcony. We were at the entrance to the Grand Canal, opposite the customhouse, a fine building with rustic columns, supporting a square tower, terminated by two Hercules kneeling back to back and sustaining a globe on their robust shoulders, on which revolves a rude figure of Fortune, holding in her hand the two ends of a veil which form a weather-vane and yields to the slightest breeze; for the figure is hollow like the Giraldo of Seville. Near the customhouse is the round white cupola of *Santa Maria della Salute*, with its pentagonal staircase and population of statues.

An Eve in most honest dishabille smiles at us from the top of a cornice under the sun's rays. We immediately recognized the *Salute* from the fine picture of Canaletto, which is at the Museum. Far off can be seen the point of the *Giudecca* and the Isle of St. Georges the Great, where the Church of Palladio shows its Greek façade, its Oriental dome, and its Venetian steeple of the most vivid rose.

A swimming school was installed at the mouth of the canal, and the rigging of divers craft of varying tonnage, from the fishing boat to the steamer and the three-master, was outlined in the blue serenity of the morning. The boats which victual the city arrive by sail or oars. It was a ravishing picture, as bright as that of the night before had been sombre.

Going on foot in Venice is a difficult thing for a stranger. Our first need, therefore, was to hire a gondola. The gondola has been much abused in comic operas, romances, and novels. There would be no reason for this if it were better known. We will give here a detailed description of it. The gondola is a natural production of Venice, an animated being having its special and local life, a kind of fish which can subsist only in the water of a canal. The lagoon and the gondola are inseparable, and one com-

pletes the other. Without the gondola, Venice would be impossible. The city is a Madrepore of which the gondola is the mollusk. It alone can meander through the inextricable network of the aquatic streets.

The gondola, long and narrow, raised at both ends, drawing very little water, has the form of a skate. Its prow is armed with a piece of iron, smooth and polished, which vaguely recalls the curved neck of a swan, or rather the finger-board of a violin with its pegs. Six teeth, the interstices of which are sometimes ornamented with pinking, contribute to this resemblance. This piece of iron serves for decoration, for defense, and for counterpoise, the craft being more heavily loaded in the stern. On the sheathing of the gondola, near the prow and the poop, are fastened two pieces of wood made like the yokes of oxen, in which the rower plies his oar standing on a small platform.

All that is visible of a gondola is coated with tar or black paint. A carpet more or less elegant decorates the bottom of the boat; the cabin, called the *felce*, is in the middle, and is easily removed when it is desired to substitute an awning for it, a modern piece of degeneracy at which every good Venetian groans.

The *felce* is draped entirely with black cloth, and furnished with two soft cushions of morocco of the same color; in addition, there are two seats on the sides capable of holding four persons. In each side there are cut two windows which are ordinarily left open, but which can be closed in three ways: first, by a beveled Venetian glass; secondly, by a window-blind with movable blades, enabling the occupants to see without being seen; thirdly, by a panel of cloth, over which, to increase the mystery, the cloth of the *felce* can also be dropped. These different systems move on a transverse slide. The door, by which one enters backwards, since it is difficult to turn around in that narrow space, has only a glass

and a panel. That part which is of wood is carved with more or less elegance, according to the wealth of the owner or the taste of the gondolier. On the left frame of this door a copper shield surmounted by a crown glitters; it is on this that one has his coat-of-arms or his cipher engraved; beneath, a small frame supplied with a glass and opening into the interior contains the image for which the owner or the gondolier has a special devotion: the Holy Virgin, Saint Mark, Saint Theodore, or Saint George.

It is on this side also that the lantern is hung, a custom which is gradually giving way, since many of the gondolas run without that star in front. On account of the coat-of-arms, the saint and the lantern, the left is the place of honor; it is there that the ladies are placed, or aged or distinguished persons. At the bottom a panel which can be moved permits communication with the gondolier, who is posted on the poop, the only one who really directs the craft, his oar being upon occasion either a paddle or a boat-hook. Two silken cords with handles assist you to rise when you want to go out — for one is seated very low down; the cloth of the *felce* is enlivened on the exterior by tufts of silk somewhat similar to those of the priests' birettas, and when one wishes to shut himself in completely he spreads himself out in the rear of the cabin like a pall on a coffin. To end the description let us say that on the interior sheathing some species of arabesques are raised in white on the black ground of the wood.

All this does not give a very gay appearance, and yet, if the Beppo of Lord Byron is to be believed, scenes as droll as in funeral coaches happen in these *black* gondolas. Madame Malibran, who did not like to enter these little catafalques, endeavored, but unsuccessfully, to change the color of them. This tint, which would seem to us lugubrious, does not seem so at all to the Venetians, accus-

tomed to the black by the sumptuary edicts of the ancient Republic, and with whom the water hearses, the funeral pall, and the undertaker's assistants are all in red.

We chose a gondola with two rowers. He of the poop, bronzed and rebronzed by the sun, with his little Venetian cap on the top of his head, his thick ring of tawny beard, his rolled-up sleeves, his girdle and full pantaloons, recalled quite well the ancient type; he of the prow, much more of a coxcomb and modernized, wore a cap from which escaped a curl of hair, a striped calico vest, the trousers of a gentleman, and mingled the type of gondolier with that of domestic servant. As the weather became clear, a canopy with blue and white bands replaced, to our great regret, the *felce* under which we would have willingly stifled with the heat, for the sake of our love of the local color.

We demanded to be taken at once to the Place Saint Mark, which we found where the line of gas-lamps had caused us to suppose it was situated the evening before. In standing out to sea we were able to examine the façade of our hotel, which was really very magnificent with its three stories of balconies, its Moorish windows, and its columns of marble. But for an unfortunate sign placed above the portico and containing these words, "*Hôtel de l'Europe, chez Marseille*," the Giustiniani Palace would still be exactly as one sees it in the marvelous map of Albert Durer, with the exception of two windows on the third floor; and the former owners, were they to return from the other world in the gondola of Charon, the gondolier of the infernal regions, would find without difficulty their dwelling on the Grand Canal intact, although dishonored. Venice has this peculiarity, namely, that although her drama may be finished, the decorations of the past still remain in place.

The gondoliers row standing up, bending forward on their oars. It is surprising that they do not fall every

minute into the water, since all the weight of their bodies is thrown forward. It is only long habit which gives them the necessary aplomb for holding themselves always in suspense. The apprenticeship must cost more than one ducking ; nothing excels their dexterity in avoiding shocks, the precision with which they turn a corner of a street, approach a landing or stairway ; the gondola is so sensitive to the least impression that one might call it a living being.

A few strokes of the oars very soon brought us face to face with one of the most marvelous spectacles ever afforded the contemplation of the human eye — the *Piazza* seen from the sea ! Standing at the prow of the motionless gondola, we gazed for some time, in mute ecstasy, at that picture without rival in this world, and the only one, possibly, that the imagination cannot surpass.

On the left, adopting the point of view of the open sea, the trees of the royal gardens are first perceived, tracing a green line above a white terrace ; then the *Zecca* (Hotel de la Monnaie), an edifice of robust architecture, and the ancient Library, the work of Sansovino, with its elegant arcades and crown of mythological statues.

On the right, separated by a space which forms the *Piazza*, which is the vestibule of the Place Saint Mark, the Ducal Palace offers its vermilion façade lozenged with white and rose marble ; its massive pillars, supporting a gallery of small columns, the ribs of which contain quadrilobal trefoils of six lancet windows ; its monumental balcony enlivened by corbels, niches, bell-turrets, statuettes, which a Holy Virgin dominates ; its acroteria carving its acanthus leaves upon the blue of the sky, and the spiral fillet which twists around its angles and terminates in a lofty pinnacle.

At the bottom of the *Piazza*, alongside the Library, the Campanile rises to a lofty height, an immense brick

tower, the sharp-pointed roof of which is surmounted by an angel of gold. On the side of the Ducal Palace, Saint Mark's shows a corner of its doorway, which faces the *Piazza*. The perspective is formed by several arcades of the old Procuraties, and the clock tower with its *Jacquemarts* of bronze, its lion of Saint Mark on its blue starry ground, and its great dial of azure, on which the twenty-four hours are inscribed.

On the first plane, in front of the landing-place of the gondolas, between the Library and the Ducal Palace, rise two enormous columns, each of a single piece of African granite. On the left-hand one, coming from the sea, stands in triumphant attitude, his forehead covered with a nimbus of metal, sword by his side, lance at his wrist, his hand supporting his target, a Saint Theodore, of beautiful contour, trampling under foot a crocodile. On the right-hand one, the lion of Saint Mark, in bronze, the wings outstretched, his claw on his Gospel, turns his tail to the crocodile of Saint Theodore with the most morose and sullen air possible for a heraldic animal to assume. The two monsters do not seem to be on good terms with each other.

It is said to be of ill omen to disembark between these two columns, where in other days executions were performed, and we begged the gondolier to land us by the stairway of the *Zecca* or at the *Bridge de la Paille*, not at all wishing to meet the end of Marino Faliero, to whom misfortune came through his having been thrown by a tempest at the feet of these redoubtable pillars.

Above the Ducal Palace the new prisons can be seen, to which it is bound by the Bridge of Sighs, a kind of cenotaph suspended above the *Canal de la Paille*; then a curved line of palaces, of houses, churches, edifices of all sorts, which forms the "Wharf of the Slaves," and is terminated by the solid mass of verdure of the Public Gardens, the point of which runs into the sea.

Near the *Zecca* the Grand Canal empties and in front appears the customhouse, which with the Public Gardens form the two ends of this panoramic arc on which Venice extends.

We have noted as correctly as it was possible for us to do, the principal features of the picture; but what we cannot render is the effect, the color, the movement, the shimmering of air and water, the life.

How to express those rosy tints of the Ducal Palace which seem to be living as flesh; that snowy whiteness of the statues, delineating their contour in the azure of Veronese and of Titian; those reds of the Campanile that caress the sun; those splendors of a distant gilding; those thousand aspects of the sea as clear as a mirror, as swarming with spangles as the skirt of a dancer? Who will paint that vague, luminous atmosphere full of rays and of mists, from which the sun does not exclude the clouds; that coming and going of gondolas, of boats, of galiots; those red or white sails, those ships familiarly supporting their prows against the wharf, with their myriad picturesque accessories of pavilions, of lines and nets spread out to dry; the sailors loading and unloading the ships, the chests that are opened, the casks that are rolled, the motley idlers of the mole,—Dalmatians, Greeks, Levantines and others that Canaletto would depict with a single stroke,—how make all this visible simultaneously as in nature, by means of a successive process? For the poet, less fortunate than the painter or the musician, can only arrange a single line; the former has a whole palette; the latter, a whole orchestra.

The landing-place of the *Piazzetta* is adorned with Gothic lanterns embellished with figures of saints, fixed on poles which are sunk in the sea. One of these lanterns was given by the Duchess of Berry. The gondoliers make a disturbance at this landing-place more frequently than at any other.

In order to approach the shore it is necessary to use the hatchet-shaped iron in the prow as a wedge, by the aid of which this thick mass can be divided.

When one approaches, a crowd of rascallions, old and young, in rags, run forward, holding in their hands a staff armed with a nail which hooks the boat like a gaff and holds it while you put your foot on shore, an operation which at the first attempt is somewhat difficult owing to the extreme mobility of the frail vessel. You may think that this solicitude of the gamins has no aim but to prevent you from falling into the water or taking a foot-bath on a lower step; but a dirty hand or greasy cap, humbly extended, will invite you to drop into it the sou or Austrian centime, as a recompense for this slight service.

On the pedestal of the two columns are seated gondoliers waiting for a job, beggars, children emaciated and half-naked, who seek their living on the stairways of Venice, an entire picaresque population loving their *far niente* and the sun. These pedestals were in other days adorned with sculptures which are to-day almost effaced by the friction, and which seem to have represented figurines holding fruits and foliage. How many seats of breeches have found it necessary to use this granite is a problem which we leave to the mathematicians to solve. In order to finish with the columns let us say that that of Saint Theodore leans a little toward the Library, and that of the lion of Saint Mark toward the Ducal Palace.

At the first step one takes toward the *Piazzetta*, an Austrian soldier, striped with yellow and black like a zebra, is encountered, and four pieces of artillery, their carriages painted yellow, their mouths stopped up, the caisson in the rear, in a sort of artillery park backed up against the arcades of the Doges' Palace. Apart from all political ideas, this sight causes a shock like a discord



in the concert of things to be admired ; it is brutality which sprawls dully in the midst of poetry.

The façade of the Ducal Palace which looks out upon the *Piazzetta* is like that which looks toward the sea ; it has, like the other, a monumental casement from which Manin, in resigning the provisory government after the capitulation of Venice, in 1849, harangued the people for the last time.

At the end of the *Piazzetta*, the *Piazza* is met with, which forms a square with it and which is, as its name implies, much larger. The four sides of the *Piazza* are occupied by the façade of the Church of Saint Mark, situated next the Ducal Palace ; by the clock tower, the Procuraties, old and new, and an unsightly modern palace of classic taste, stupidly built in 1809 in order to make a *salle du trône*, in place of the delicious church of San Germiniano, the charming style of which corresponded so well to the Basilica.

The Campanile, adorned at its base by a charming little edifice of Sansovino which is called the Logette, is isolated and is placed at the angle of the new Procuraties ; on the same line almost are planted the three masts which supported the standards of the Republic.

In going back to the bottom of the Place, one enjoys a really fairy-like sight which dazzles you, however prepared for it you may be by pictures and descriptions. Saint Mark is before you with its five cupolas ; its porches glistening with mosaics on a groundwork of gold ; its slender steeples ; its immense area of glass-work before which the four horses of Lysippus paw the ground ; its gallery of columns ; its winged lion ; its gables adorned with foliage and bearing statues ; its pillars of porphyry and antique marbles ; its aspect of temple, basilica and mosque ; a strange and mysterious edifice, exquisite and barbarous, an immense accumulation of riches, a church of pirates, made of fragments stolen or conquered from all civilizations.

A vivid light makes the great evangelist glisten upon his sky starred with gold ; the mosaics shine like spangles ; the cupolas of a silvery gray grow round like the domes of Saint Sophia at Constantinople, and flocks of pigeons fly from the cornices and balustrades every moment, coming to light familiarly upon the Place. One might regard it as an Oriental dream petrified by the might of some enchanter, or a Moorish church or a Christian mosque built by a converted caliph.

On this walk we did not pay attention to any particular detail, and we furnish you with our impression, incomplete but general, and colored by that vivid shade which the first glance gives.

We will ascend now, if you please, to the Campanile. It is our habit upon arriving in a city ; we prefer this map in relief to all the plans and all the guides in the world. One in this way at once fixes in his mind the configuration of the place he is going to dwell in.

Like the Giralda of Seville, the Campanile has no staircase. The ascent is made on an inclined plane which could be climbed on horseback so easy is the grade. The interior of the Campanile is filled with a cage of bricks, and which is supplied with windows with great lengthwise openings. At each pillar a small loophole arranged on one of the faces of the tower permits sufficient light to filter through. After having climbed some distance a platform is reached where the clocks are. Columns of green and red marble support four arcades on each side of the Campanile, and permit the view to extend to the four quarters of the horizon : a spiral stairway allows one to ascend still further, as far as the foot of the gilded angel ; but it is a useless fatigue, for the whole panorama of Venice unfolds itself at this first station.

If, leaning on the balcony, with face turned toward the side where the sea is, one looks beneath him, one sees first the roof of the Library of Sansovino, now the Royal

Palace, peopled by Venus, Neptune, Mars, and other allegorical figures; then that of the Ducal Palace, all covered with lead; one looks also into the Court of the *Zecca*; and the *Piazzetta*, with its columns and its gondolas, displays its pavement divided into compartments. Further off is the sea dotted with islands and craft of all kinds.

Saint George the Great, with its red steeple, its two white bastions, its dock, its girdle of boats attracted by the freedom of the port, appears on the first plane. A canal separates it from the *Giudecca*, that maritime suburb of Venice which turns toward the city a row of houses and toward the sea a girdle of gardens. The *Giudecca* has two churches, Santa Maria and the Redeemer, the white cupola of which shelters a convent of Capuchin monks.

Beyond Saint George's *la Sanità* is to be seen, a small islet; San Servolo, where the insane asylum is located; *les Arméniens*, a monastery and college of Oriental languages; further still the Lido, a dry and sandy beach, which forms with the long, narrow, and low-lying tongue of land of Malamocco, a rampart for Venice against the waves of the Adriatic.

Back of *la Giudecca*, sinking more toward the horizon, is *San Clemente*, a place of penitence and of detention for priests under discipline; Poveglia, where vessels are quarantined; and further still than the line of Malamocco, almost invisible in the distance, is the little island of Saint Peter. These islands are indicated to the eye by one of those tall red Venetian steeples of which the Campanile seems to be the prototype.

On this sea there is a constant movement of boats, gondolas, and vessels of all kinds. The steam-boat from Trieste, at the moment we were at the top of the steeple, arrived, pouring forth volumes of smoke, turning its wheels, and making a great disturbance of

the peaceful water, the bottom of which was visible in places; rows of stakes mark on the lagoon the channels which are navigable for ships; for the ordinary depth is only from three to four feet. These posts seen from this height have the appearance of men fishing, standing in the water up to their hips. Further off, the eye loses itself in great circles of azure which might be mistaken for the sky, if some sail gilded by a sunbeam did not apprise us of our error.

The transparency of the sky, the limpidity of the water, the brilliancy of the light, the purity of the silhouette, the strength and delicacy of tint give to this immense view a striking and dazzling splendor.

In turning toward the base of the *Piazza*, a perspective also is presented: the continuation of *la Giudecca*; the customhouse, with its dishevelled Fortune, the ball of which, having been recently regilded, shines with a wholly new brilliancy; the *Salute* and its double dome; the entrance to the Grand Canal, which in spite of its width, soon disappears between the houses; San Mose and its bell-tower, joined to the church by a bridge; Saint Stephano, with brick tower, surmounted by a statue which tramples on a crescent; the great reddish church of *Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari*, lifting above the roof its angular porch; the black cupola of Saint Simeon the Less, the only one in Venice of this color, because instead of being covered with lead, it is roofed with copper, which in the midst of the silver caps of the other churches produces the effect of the armor of the mysterious knights in the tournaments of the Middle Ages; there at the extremity of the canal, always invisible, is San Geremia, whose dome and tower received a few bullets during the siege; behind San Geremia the trees of the botanical gardens are covered with green, and the *Scalzi* appear, alongside the railway station, their façade in process of repair, covered with carpenters.

On the extreme horizon undulate in lines of azure the Euganean mountains, ramifications of the Friulian Alps. At the foot of the mountains great green bands denote fertile cultivation of the vigorous soil, and Padua outlines its silhouette. The railway bridge, easily visible from this height, crosses the lagune, binds Venice to the Continent, and makes a peninsula of an island. Fusine and Mestre are on this side, the former on the right of the railway, the latter on the left.

The third face of the Campanile, looking toward the clock tower, frames in its window *Santa Maria dell'Orto*, whose lofty red steeple and great roof of tiles are perfectly distinguishable; the Holy Apostles, with its white tower, adorned by a clock-dial and a cross on a ball; and the Jesuits making the mauled and distorted statues of their pediment dance on the blue of the sea.

It is peculiar that nowhere can any appearance of a canal be discovered; the cuttings which these streets of water ought to make in the islands of houses are not even suspected; the whole forms a compact block, a coagulated tempest of tiles and roof in which the churches float on the surface like vessels at anchor.

In inclining a little toward the right, the eye encounters the bell-turret of the gray cupola of Saint John and Saint Paul, a vast brick building; the elegant tower of *Santa Maria Formosa*, whose whiteness trenches on the red tints of the *ensemble*; and further off the Isle of *San Secondo*, a small fortress in the sea. Farther on the cemetery, framed in rose-colored walls and flanked by two churches, Saint Christopher and Saint Michael, looks like a small green stain speckled with black crosses. In the same direction, in the middle of the lagune, Murano, where the Venetian glassware is manufactured which becomes the ornament of the dressing-table, attracts attention by the red Campanile of its Church of the Angels, the roof of Saint Peter, and three great cypress trees

which rise like three sombre masts in a group of houses and trees.

Beyond the Ducal Palace, we discover Saint Francis of the Vineyard, and its spire, remarkable for its red panels bordered with black; Saint Andrew and Saint Zacharias, the grayish dome of which, surmounted by a cross with balls, like the cross of Saint Mark, and a lofty façade composed of three rounded pediments, emerge from the midst of the houses; the Arsenal, with its square tower, rosy at top, white at its base, its reservoirs, where the water gleams, its great sheds, constructed in the form of arches or aqueducts, its pulleys, engines, and general aspect of the storehouse of a rope manufactory; and further off the dome and spire of Saint Peter of Castello; the triangular pediment and slender spire of Saint Helena.

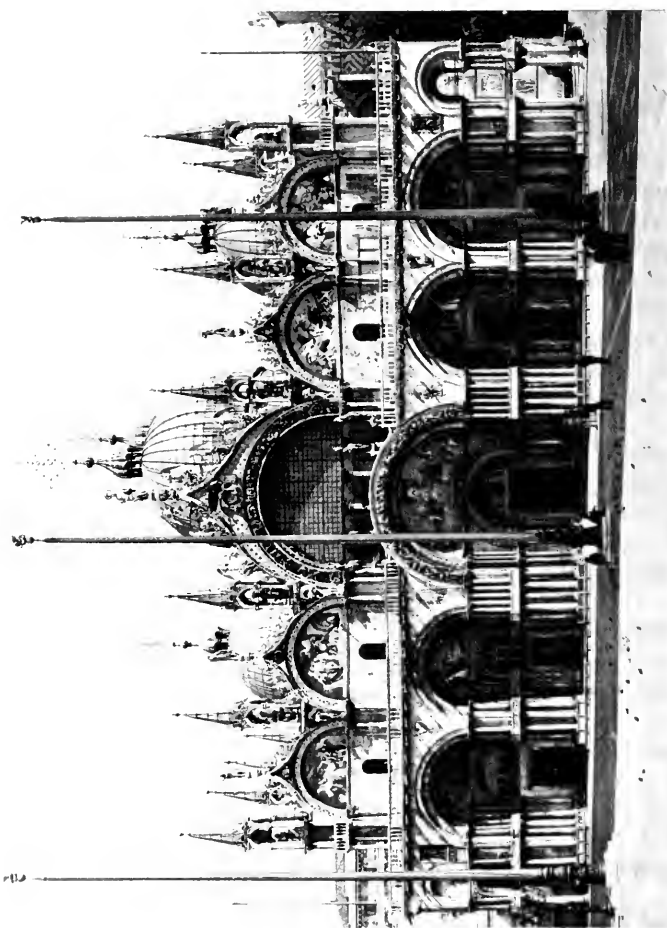
Toward the sea, on the line of the open sea, Burano, Matorbo, and Torcello are outlined, where dwelt the first Venetians. The remoteness only permits the eye to grasp some green patches of cultivation, some specks of houses and three churches, one of which is more apparent than the others.

Then there is the sky and the water, a festoon of foam which whitens, a passing sail, a gull flapping its wings in the blue and luminous vapor; a clear immensity, the grandest of all immensities!

On the ledge of this window we read, written in letters of a characteristic calligraphy, this inscription cut with a knife: "*Adrian Ziegler, 1604.*" Was this an ancestor of the modern painter of that name who has left on the front of the Campanile this trace of his passage through Venice?

Now we can redescend into the city, to go about it and examine it in all its details; we now know its general configuration.









## *VENICE*

*St. Mark's (front), tenth to fifteenth centuries*



## CHAPTER VIII

### SAINT MARK'S

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**I**N describing the *Piazza*, we have given the general aspect of Saint Mark's as it can be grasped at the first glance ; but Saint Mark's is a world concerning which volumes could be written, and we must be permitted to return to it.

Like the Mosque of Cordova, with which it has more than one point of resemblance, the Basilica of Saint Mark has more breadth than height, contrary to the custom of Gothic churches, which launch themselves toward the sky with a profusion of pointed arches, spires, and steeples. The great central cupola is only 110 feet high. Saint Mark has preserved the character of primitive Christianity, which endeavored, when scarcely emerged from the Catacombs, not as yet having formulated anything of art, to build itself a church out of the débris of ancient temples and the data of pagan art. Begun in 979 under the Doge Pierre Orseolo, the Basilica of Saint Mark was slowly raised, being enriched in each century with some new treasure, some new beauty, and, a peculiar circumstance which upsets all idea of proportion, this mass of columns, of capitals, of bas-relief, of enamel, of mosaics, this mixture of Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Arab, Gothic styles, has resulted in a most harmonious whole.

This incoherent temple, in which the pagan might find again an Altar to Neptune with its dolphins, its tridents, its marine shells serving as a holy-water basin, or in which the Mahometan, upon observing the inscriptions surrounding the walls of the vaults, like the *Souras* of the Koran, might believe himself in his mosque ; in

which the Christian Greek would encounter his Panagia crowned as an empress of Constantinople, his barbarous Christ with the intertwined monogram, the special saints of his calendar outlined after the manner of Panselinos and of the monk-painters of the Holy Mountain, and in which the Catholic also feels living and palpitating in the shadow of the waves illumined by the tawny reflection of the mosaics of old, the absolute faith of the earliest days, the submission to dogma and to hierarchic forms, the mysterious and profound Christianity of the ages of faith ; this temple, we say, built of pieces and bits which contradict themselves, enchants and delights the eye more than though its architecture had been of the most correct and symmetrical character. Unity is the result of multiplicity. Trefoils, ogives, columns, cupolas, marble plaques, backgrounds of gold, and vivid colors of the mosaics,—all these are arranged with a rare good fortune and form a most magnificent monumental bouquet.

The façade facing the Place has five porticoes giving upon the Church, and two conducting under the exterior side galleries ; in all, seven openings, of which three are on each side of the great central portico. The principal door is distinguished by two groups of four columns of porphyry and antique green as far as the first story, and of six as far as the second, which support the springing of the full centre.

The other porticoes have only two columns for both stories. We are speaking now only of the façade itself, for the mass of the porticoes is decorated with other small columns in Cipolin marble, jasper, and other precious materials.

We propose to examine with some detail the mosaics and the ornamentation of this marvelous doorway. Commencing with the first arcade on the side toward the sea, we notice above a square door fastened by a bar, a By-

zantine veneering of black and gold in the form of a shrine, with two angels joined to the ribs of the pointed arch. Higher up in the tympan of the full centre, is presented a large mosaic on a ground of gold, representing the body of Saint Mark removed from the crypts of Alexandria, and passed by a trick through the Turkish customhouse, between two sides of pork, an unclean food of which the Mussulmans have a horror, and contact with which would force them to numberless ablutions. The infidels turned away with gestures of disgust, and stupidly permitted the body of the holy apostle to be carried off. This mosaic was executed from drawings by Pietro Vecchia, about 1650. In the springing of the archivolt, on the right, is fitted an antique bas-relief of Hercules carrying on his shoulders the hind of Erymanthus and trampling under his feet the hydra of Lerne, and in the springing of the left (from the point of view of the spectator), by one of those contrasts so frequent in Saint Mark's, the Angel Gabriel is seen standing erect, winged and booted, with a nimbus round his head, leaning upon his lance; a singular pendant to the son of Alcmena and Jupiter.

In the second arcade a door is hewn which is not symmetrical with the other. This door is surmounted by a window with three lancets, on which are inscribed two quadrilobal trefoils, and is encompassed by a border of gems. The mosaic of the tympan, also upon a gold ground like all those of Saint Mark's, has for its subject the arrival of the body of the apostle at Venice, where it is received on its removal from the ship by the clergy and principal men of the city. The ship which transported the body may be seen, and the wicker baskets in which it was enclosed; this mosaic also is the work of Pietro Vecchia.

A Saint Demetrius, seated, with sword half-drawn from its sheath, his name carved near the head, con-

times the row of bas-reliefs chased upon the façade of the Basilica as on the wall of a museum.

We now come to the central door of the great portico. It is, as it ought to be, more ornate than the others; in addition to the mass of columns of antique marble which strengthen it and give it importance, three cordons, two exterior and the other interior, very strongly outline its arch by their protuberance. These three rows of sculptured ornamentation, excavated and cut with marvelous patience, are composed of a tufted spiral of foliage, boughs, flowers, fruits, birds, angels, saints, figurines and chimeras of all kinds; in the last, the arabesques proceed from the hands of two statues seated at each end of the cordon.

A Last Judgment of large dimensions occupies the top of the arch. It is the composition of Antonio Zanchi and the translation into mosaic is by Pietro Spagna. The work dates from about 1680 and was restored in 1838. The Christ, which reminds one a little of that of Michael Angelo in the Sistine, is separating the good from the wicked. He has near Him His mother and His beloved Apostle Saint John, who appear to intercede for the sinners, and leans on His cross, which an angel is holding with an expression of respectful solicitude. Other angels are blowing trumpets to awaken the obstinate sleepers from their tombs.

It is above this portico, on the gallery formed by the tower of the church, that are situated, with antique pillars for pedestals, the celebrated horses which for a moment adorned the triumphal arch of the Carrousel. Opinions are very much divided as to their origin: some believe them to be a Roman work of the time of Nero transported to Constantinople in the fourth century; others consider them a Greek work of the Island of Chios, brought by the order of Theodosius in the fifth century to the same city, where they adorned the hip-

podrome ; and others again affirm that these horses are from the hand of Lysippus. That which is certain, however, is that they are ancient, and that in the year 1205, Marino Zeno, who was Podestat at Constantinople for the Venetians, had them removed from the hippodrome and gave them to Venice. These horses, of natural size, somewhat thickset in their necks and shoulders, with manes on the right side cut like those of the horses of the Parthenon, may be classed among the most beautiful remains of antiquity. They are historical and genuine — a rare quality ; their movement shows that they were harnessed to some triumphal chariot. Their material is not less precious than their form. They are, it is said, a bronze of Corinth, on which the greenish rust may be seen through a veneer of gilding which time has caused to scale off.

The fourth portico offers in its inferior part the same distribution as the second. The tympan of the arcade is occupied by a mosaic representing the Doge, the Senators, the patricians of Venice coming to honor the body of Saint Mark extended on a shrine and covered with a brilliant blue drapery ; in the corner is hidden a group of Turks put to confusion through being robbed of so great a treasure.

This mosaic, one of the most brilliant in tone, was done by Leopoldo del Pozzo, from a design of Sebastian Rizzi, in 1728. It is very beautiful. The Senator in a purple robe has an air which is altogether Titianesque. In the springing of the archivolt which is nearest to the great doorway can be seen a Saint George in Greco-Byzantine style ; in the other, an angel or unknown saint.

The fifth portico is one of the most curious of all. Five small windows, with lattices of gold, fill the lower part of it. Above, the four evangelic beasts in gilded bronze,—the ox, lion, eagle, angel,—fantastic in form as Japanese chimeras, throw squinting glances, while a

strange cavalier, on a mount which might either be Pegasus or the pale horse of the Apocalypse, paws the ground between two rose-windows of gold. The capitals of the columns are also of a more savage taste, more archaic and more tufted than are anywhere else to be found.

Still higher a mosaic, the work of an unknown artist of the twelfth century, contains a picture of great interest, a view of the Basilica as it was eight centuries ago, erected to receive the relics of Saint Mark.

The domes, of which the perspective shows only three, and the porticoes of the façade had almost the same form as they have to-day; the horses, recently arrived from Constantinople, are already in place; the arcade in the middle is occupied by a large Byzantine Christ with His Greek monogram, and the others are filled with rose-windows, flowers and arabesques. The body of the Saint, borne upon the shoulders of prelates and bishops, enters the church which is consecrated to him. A crowd of personages, of groups of women, clothed as one fancies the Greek empresses, in long robes starred with gems, press forward to view the ceremony.

The row of unequal bas-reliefs, the subjects of which we have mentioned, end on this side with a Hercules attacked by the wild boar of Calydon, and who seems to menace a grotesque little being half-buried in a cask. Under this bas-relief are stretched out two lions rampant, and, a little lower, an antique figure in *alto rilievo* bears upon his shoulder an inverted amphora. This theme, afforded doubtless by chance, has been happily repeated in the remainder of the edifice.

This row of porticoes which forms the first story of the façade is bordered by a balustrade of white marble; the second contains five arcades, of which the middle one, larger than the others, looms up behind the horses of Lysippus, and in place of mosaic, is glazed with round panes and adorned with four antique pillars.



Six bell-turrets, composed of four columns forming a niche for a statue of the evangelist and a pinnacle encompassed by a gilded crown and surmounted by a weather vane, separate these arches, the tympan of which is in full centre and the ribs of which taper off in lancet points. The four subjects of the mosaics represent the Ascension, the Resurrection, Jesus making Adam and Eve and the patriarchs come forth from Limbo, and the Descent from the Cross by Luigi Gaetano, according to designs of Maffeo Verona, in 1617. In the springing of the arcades are placed some figures of naked slaves, of life size, bearing on their shoulders urns and amphoræ, inclined as though they wished to pour from above into a basin water taken from some fountain; to these hollow amphoræ spouts are adjusted, and the slaves are the gargoyles. They are of a great variety of poses and a superb tournure.

In the lancet point of the great window in the middle, on a dark-blue ground sown with stars, stands forth the lion of Saint Mark, gilded, with a nimbus, wings outstretched, claw on an open Gospel on which are inscribed these words: "*Pax tibi, Marce, evangelista meus*;" he has an apocalyptic and formidable air, and watches the sea like a vigilant dragon. Above this symbolic representation of the evangelist, Saint Mark, this time in human form, stands erect at the end of the gable, and seems to receive the homage of the neighboring statues. On each gable rises a statue,—Saint John, Saint George, Saint Michael, Saint Theodore,—decorated with a nimbus in the form of a hat.

At each extremity of the balustrade are two poles painted red, on which the standards were raised on Sundays and feast days. At the end of the handrail on the side of the Campanile is fixed a carved head of red porphyry.

The side façade, which looks on the *Piazzetta* and

touches the Ducal Palace, merits examination. If in spite of all pains and exactitude possible, our description seems a trifle confused, do not ask too much; it is difficult to depict with much order a hybrid edifice as composite and unequal as Saint Mark's.

In going out of Bartholomew's door, which leads to the Stairway of the Giants, in the court of the Doges' Palace, the Basilica shows you a flank bedizened with marble plaques, and antique, Byzantine, and Middle Age bas-reliefs, with birds, chimeras, and animals of all kinds; lions, ferocious beasts pursuing hares, and infants half-swallowed by wild beasts, holding in their hands a paper the inscription on which is almost effaced.

Among the curiosities of this corner are two figures of porphyry repeated twice in a precisely similar fashion. They represent warriors having almost the costumes of Crusaders entering Constantinople and are sculptured in a manner altogether primitive and barbaric, like the more naïve Gothic bas-reliefs. These men of porphyry, with hand on hilt of sword, have the air of banding together for a desperate venture. Someone has claimed that they represent Harmodius and Aristogiton preparing to strike the tyrant Hipparchus. That is the common opinion.

The savant Chevalier Mustoxidi recognized them as the four brothers Anemuria, who had conspired against Alexis Comanus, Emperor of the East. They could just as well be the four sons of Aymon. We are not of this opinion. According to others, these four good fellows of porphyry were two couples of Saracen robbers who, having conceived the project of carrying off the treasure of Saint Mark, reciprocally poisoned each other for having too large a share in the enterprise.

It is on this side that two big pillars taken from the church of Saint Saba, at Saint John of Acre, are placed, all covered with fantastic ornamentations and inscrip-

tions in Cufic characters quite defaced, and the mystery of which has not yet been penetrated.

A little further off, at the corner of the Basilica, there is a big block of porphyry in the form of the trunk of a column, with a pedestal and capital of white marble, a sort of pillory in which in other days bankrupts were exposed. This custom has fallen into desuetude, but nevertheless it is seldom that anyone sits there, and the Venetians, so ready usually to establish themselves on the first pedestal or stairway they come to, seem to avoid it.

A bronze door leading to the baptistery occupies the base of the first arch; it has for an impost a lancet and trefoils in four leaves; two shields with gems of vivid colors, one of which is burdened with a cross, complete the decoration of this tympan. A mosaic of Saint Vitus in a niche, and an evangelist holding a book and pen, are delineated at the two lower ends of the arch.

A little pediment in the style of the Renaissance and some white marble plaques intersected by a green cross, fill the space of the second portico. A bench in red brocatelle of Verona, offers a convenient seat for the lazy or the dreamers who, with feet in the sun, and head in the shade, according to the method of Zafari, think of nothing or think of everything, while they watch at the foot of the Campanile, the little cell of Sansovino, or the blue sea and the Isle of Saint George, at the end of the *Piazzetta*.

On the verd antique capitals which support this arch squat two monsters of the Apocalypse, extravagant forms beheld by Saint John in the hallucinations of the Isle of Patmos; the one which has a hooked beak like an eagle holds a little heifer with its limbs bent under it; the other, which partakes of the lion and the griffin, buries its claws in the body of a child, placed crosswise; one of the talons seems to put out the eye of the victim.

The angle is formed by a detached and stocky column which bears a sheaf of five small columns upon its broad capital. At the arch of this doorway and covered by a patchwork of varied marbles, is an eagle in mosaic, holding a book between its claws.

The second story shows us on the gable of the arcades two statues of cardinal virtues of a beautiful tournure : Force caressing a pet lion which stands up like a playful dog, and Faithfulness holding a sword with the air of a Bradamante. The sacristan baptizes one with the name of Venice ; the other, the Queen of Sheba.

Incrustations of malachite ; varied gems ; a great barbaric Madonna presenting her son to the adoration of the faithful, and flanked by two lamps which are lighted every evening ; a bas-relief of peacocks displaying their tails, which possibly came from an old temple of Juno ; a Saint Christopher bearing his burden ; capitals plaited in corbels and of most charming caprice ; — these are the riches which this angle of the Basilica presents to the visitors of the *Piazzetta*.

The other lateral face looks on a little Place, the prolongation of the *Piazza*. At the entrance to this Place lie two lions of red marble ; cousins-german to those of the Alhambra in the ignorant fantasy of their forms and the grotesque ferocity of their muzzles and their manes. They have acquired a prodigious polish, for since time immemorial the little gamins of the city are accustomed to pass their days in climbing up on them, and using them as flying horses. At the base rises the Palace of the Patriarch of Venice, of recent construction, quite disagreeable to view if it did not disappear in the shadow of Saint Mark ; and, on the flank, the ancient façade of the church of Saint Basso.

This side is a little less burdened than the other ; it is covered with mosaics and gems, with seals, arabesques of all ages and of all countries, birds, eagles of fantastic

shapes, such as spread eagles and martlets of heraldry. The lion of Saint Mark's also plays his rôle in this symbolic menagerie. The vacant spaces of the porticos are filled either by little windows surrounded by palms and arabesques or by incrustations of Byzantine or antique fragments. In these medallions are sculptured men and animals fighting. Looking closely, the Mithridatic bull, struck in the neck by the sacrificer, may possibly be discovered, for no religion is wanting to this naïvely Pantheistic temple. And undoubtedly here is Ceres, who seeks her daughter, a pine tree in each hand for a torch, and mounted on a car to which two prancing dragons are harnessed. It might be a Hindoo idol, so archaic is its style, and it recalls the Persepolitan sculptures. It is a strange pendant for a sacrifice of Abraham in bas-relief, which carries us back to primitive times of Christian art.

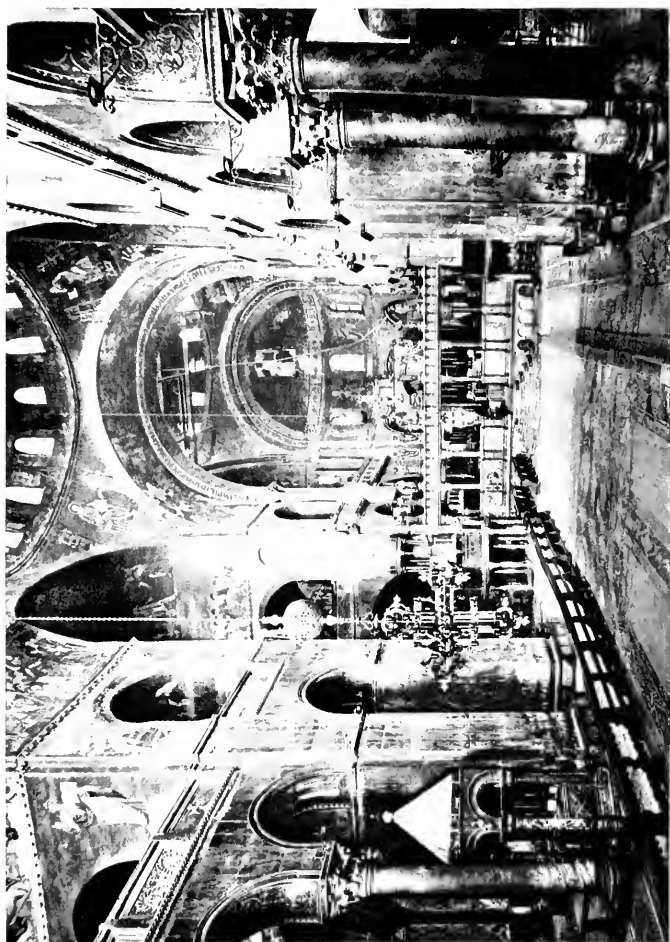
Another bas-relief, composed of two rows of sheep, six on each side, looking toward a throne and separated by two palm branches, very much interested us, for we wished to know what it signifies, and we made vain efforts to decipher the inscription in Gothic or abbreviated Greek letters which indicates, doubtless, its subject. These sheep are possibly cows, and then the bas-relief would have for its subject Pharaoh's Dream. An antique fragment, fitted into the wall a little further along, depicts one initiated into the mysteries of Eleusis placing a crown on the mystic palm, which does not prevent Saint George in the archivolt from strutting on his throne in Grecian style, and the four evangelists, Saint Mark, Saint John, Saint Luke, and Saint Matthew, from continuing their march on the tympan, the gables, and the arches, alone or accompanied by their symbolic animals.

The portico, which opens upon the arm of the cross formed by the Basilica, is surrounded by a thick, excavated, chiseled fillet, a charming efflorescence of foliage, leaves, and angels. A delightful Virgin serves as a key

for the arch. Above the door is a distorted, heart-shaped ogive, hollowed out at the base like those of the Mosque of Cordova, an Arab fantasy, corrected in good season by a beautiful Nativity, which is wholly Christian, and of a very impressive sentiment. Beyond these we have only to mention a Saint Christopher, some apostles and saints in frames of white and red tessellated marble, and a charming face of Our Lady, with the hands outstretched as in benediction, between two kneeling angels who adore her.

We have spoken in our description of a head of porphyry enchased on the balustrade, above the fragment of column where the bankrupts were compelled to sit. According to a popular legend, the truth of which we in no wise guarantee, Count Carmagnola, after great services rendered the Republic, having wished to become possessed of power, the Council of Ten, in order to reconcile justice and gratitude, had him decapitated and then raised a monument to him, which consists of this head of porphyry on this pedestal,—a strange statue, the body of which is wanting, while the head on this balustrade seems exposed as that of a chief of malefactors in a cage. But the pillory is Saint Mark's, the place sacred, the Capitol and Palladium of Venice. When it was necessary to put heroes to the torture in order to obtain the requisite confessions, according to the ideas of the time, for their condemnation, the arms which had combated valiantly for the State were respected and fire was applied to the feet, a mixture of deference and cruelty which accords very well with the legend.









*VENICE*  
*Interior of St. Mark's*



## CHAPTER IX

### SAINT MARK'S—*Concluded*

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ALL promenaders of the Mole and the *Piazzetta* must have noticed the two small lights which are always burning on the side of Saint Mark's in front of the Madonna delineated in mosaic work on the face of the Cathedral, on a level with the balustrade. There are two different legends concerning these lights. We will narrate without comment both versions, their authenticity being undoubted by both the sacristans and the gondoliers.

In the days of the Republic, a man was assassinated on the *Piazzetta*. The murderer, frightened by some noise, dropped the sheath of the stiletto as he started to run away. A baker who was passing by on his way home saw the glistening sheath adorned with silver, and stooped down to pick it up, not seeing the body on account of the darkness.

The *sbirri*, discovering a man close by the body of the victim, arrested him and, having searched him, found on his person a case which fitted perfectly the poignard drawn from the wound. The poor baker, in spite of his protestations of innocence, was imprisoned, tried, condemned, and executed. Some years after, a notorious bandit, convicted of many crimes and about to ascend the scaffold, tormented by remorse, confessed that the unhappy man who had been put to death for murder was innocent and that he alone was guilty of the deed.

Thereupon, the reputation of the poor baker was solemnly rehabilitated; the judges who had condemned him were executed, and their property confiscated to provide sums for an annual mass for the repose of the baker's

soul, and for the maintenance of these two perpetual lights. Nor was this all. For fear that these little trembling stars might not be a sufficient reminder for the consciences of the judges, it was decreed that at the close of every criminal trial, when sentence has been pronounced and the executioner is about to seize his prey, a bailiff, advancing to the foot of the tribunal, shall say to the judges, "Remember the baker." Then sentence is suspended and the case retried. The utterance of the bailiff entitles the accused to an appeal and a new trial.

Here is the other version: A grand seigneur of the Republic was one day seized with a lugubrious impulse to descend into the vault where his ancestors were buried and caused their coffins to be opened. Upon doing this, he made an astounding discovery: the bodies, instead of having preserved the rigid immobility of the corpse, were twisted in attitudes betokening their desperate struggles. Their agonies had evidently begun again after their burials. He realized that they had undoubtedly been buried alive while in a cataleptic state, and he gave orders that his own body should not be lowered into the grave, when his time came to die, until it had been preserved as long as possible, and, as a matter of fact, he revived at the moment when his body was about to be put aboard the red gondola which was to bear him to his final resting-place. To show his thankfulness for having escaped this peril, he made a vow to keep these two lights perpetually burning before this shrine of the Madonna, for which he evinced a special devotion.

If one of these versions is true, it follows that the other must be false; but we must not cavil about legends, and both are thoroughly characteristic of Venice. The one thing about the whole matter that is certainly true is the fact that the two lights shine out every night in company with the stars, and that approaching from the sea their gleam can be discerned at the end of the *Piazzetta*

like a pious thought which the noise of the city cannot distract.

Before entering the church, let us glance at the five cupolas which look like silver helmets and terminate in little domes ribbed like a melon, surmounted by the cross of Saint Andrew with three golden balls on each of its points.

Ap[ro]pos of gold, it was practically decided at one time, in the wealthy days of the Republic, to gild the whole of the domes and bell-turrets; the matter was so definitely agreed upon that Gentile Bellini, having occasion to paint a view of Saint Mark's in a picture representing a procession passing along the Place, gilded his bell-turrets in the belief that in the future his picture thus painted would be correct; but Leonardo Lore-dano, being pressed for money to prosecute a war in which he was engaged, took the sequins destined for Saint Mark's and used them to destroy the enemies of Venice, and so it happened that the gilding of Saint Mark's existed only in the picture.

The Basilica of Saint Mark, like an ancient temple, is preceded by an atrium which anywhere else would be a church in itself, and which deserves special attention. Look just when you are inside the church, at that great block of red marble which stands out from the intricate designs of the pavement; it marks the spot where the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa knelt before the Ambassador of Pope Alexander III, saying, "*Non tibi, sed Petro,*" and to whom the Ambassador haughtily replied, "*Et Petro, et mihi.*"

What myriads of feet since the twenty-third of July, 1177, have combined to efface the impression made in the dust by the knees of the great Emperor who sleeps to-day at the bottom of the cavern of Kaiserslautern awaiting the time when the raven shall fly no more upon the mountain!

The three bronze doors incrustated and inlaid with silver, covered with little figures, and which usher you into the nave, are said to have come from Saint Sophia's at Constantinople; one of them is signed by Leon de Molino.

At the end of the vestibule, on the right, the Chapel of Zeno, with its retable and bronze tomb, may be discerned through a grating. The statue representing the Virgin between Saint John the Baptist and Saint Peter is called *la Madonna della Scarpa*, the Madonna of the Shoe, on account of the golden shoe upon her foot, worn away by the kisses of the faithful; all this ornamentation of metal has an odd and severe aspect.

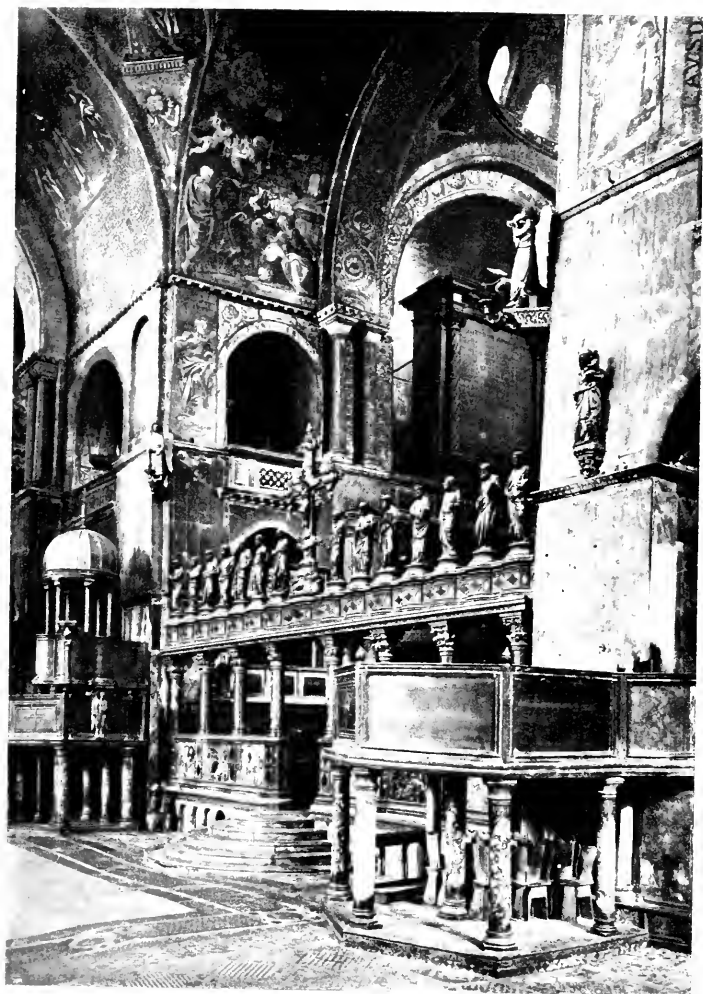
The arch of the atrium rounded off with cupolas presents the story of the Old Testament in mosaie. The first representation — as all religious history begins with a cosmogony — is that of the seven days of Creation according to the narrative of Genesis, the days being apportioned among concentric compartments. The archaic barbarity of style has something of the mysterious, weird, and primitive about it which is appropriate to the sacred character of the representations. The design, in its rigidity, typifies the idea of the Absolute of Dogma and resembles the hieroglyphics of a mystery much more than the reproduction of nature. This it is which gives to these big Gothic images a strength which more perfect works do not possess. These blue starry globes; these discs of gold and silver which represent the firmament, the sun and the moon; those disordered lights which denote the separation of the waters and the earth; that singular personage of impossible gestures, whose right hand brings forth trees and animals of fantastic forms and who bends like a mesmerist over the first man put to sleep in order that the woman may be drawn forth from his side, — this mingling of angular features and startling hues enchains the vision and the spirit like an inextricable arabesque and a profound symbolism.

*VENICE*

*St. Mark's — a detail in the interior*









Verses of Scripture, complicated by abbreviations and ligatures, add to the hieroglyphic and Genesiac aspect of the whole ; it is indeed a world which is being brought out of chaos. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, the Temptation, the Fall, the Expulsion from the earthly paradise, complete this cosmogonic and primitive cycle, the quasi-divine period of humanity.

Further along, Cain slays Abel after having seen his sacrifice rejected by the Almighty. Adam and Eve till the ground in the sweat of their brows. The four columns placed against the wall underneath the mosaics, — which are purely ornamental, for they do not support anything, — are of black and white Oriental marble, of great rarity, and were brought from Jerusalem, where, according to tradition, they were taken from the Temple of Solomon. The architect Hiram, it is certain, would not have found them out of place in the Cathedral of Saint Mark.

In the next vault, Noah, by the command of God, builds an ark in preparation for the Deluge, into which he causes to enter, couple by couple, all the animals of creation, an admirable subject for an innocent mosaist of the thirteenth century.

It is very interesting to see this fantastic zoology unfold itself upon its background of gold. The Flood is very formidable and very lugubrious, in a taste altogether different from that so much exploited by Poussin. The lines of the waves are strangely mingled with the slants of rain, which look like the teeth of combs ; the raven, the dove, the going forth from the ark, and the sacrifice of thanksgiving are all depicted ; nothing is wanting. This closes the antediluvian cycle. Verses of the Bible, which meander through all, like the inscriptions of the Alhambra, and form part of the ornamentation, explain each phase of this vanished world ; the idea is always alongside of the image.

The story, interrupted for a moment by the entrance portico adorned with some mosaics of the Virgin with archangels and prophets, is continued on the other arch. Noah plants the vine and becomes intoxicated. Japhet, Shem, and Ham, blighted by the paternal curse, respectively generate a family of the human race. The Tower of Babel raises to heaven the naïve anachronism of its Byzantine architecture, which attracts the attention of God, who becomes uneasy at its too near approach. The confusion of tongues forces the laborers to discontinue their work. The human race which thus far had been one and had spoken the same language, began its long peregrinations through an unknown world in order to recover its rights and re-establish itself.

The following cupolas, the first of which is in the vestibule, and the others in the gallery which looks toward the Place of the Lions, contain the story of the Patriarch Abraham with all its details, that of Joseph and of Moses, the whole accompanied by prophets, priests, evangelists, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Eli, Samuel, Habakkuk, Saint Alipius, Saint Simeon, and a host of others who are grouped or isolated in the arches, in the pendentives,—wherever a figure can be placed without regard to its ease or its anatomy, and an arm or limb of which may perhaps be broken in order to ornament an outlandish corner.

All these Biblical legends, full of naïve details and curious Oriental adjustments, have a haughty and savage character upon the field of gold which gives them a darker tint. These old mosaics, executed probably by Greek artists summoned from Constantinople, are much more pleasing than the more modern mosaics which aim at the picture; for example, that which covers the wall of the gallery beneath the story of Abraham and which represents the Judgment of Solomon executed from the designs of Salviati. The mosaic, like painting on glass,

ought not to strive to imitate nature ; typical forms well caught, free colors, local tones, gold backgrounds putting at a distance all idea of the picture, are what properly belong to it. A mosaic is an opaque glass window, or a glass window is a transparent mosaic.

At the end of this gallery, in the tympan of a door, we greatly admired a Madonna seated upon a throne between Saint John and Saint Peter, and presenting the infant Jesus to the faithful. It is one of the most beautiful mosaics of Saint Mark's. The head with its great fixed eyes, which penetrate you without staring at you, has something imperial and imperious in its meekness. One might imagine that the cushion on which she reposes had been embroidered at Byzantium by Helena or Irene. The Mother of God, as says the Greek monogram, and the Queen of Heaven, could not be represented in a more majestic manner. Certain barbarities of design give to this admirable figure an aspect like that of an idol (*icone*), to make use of the term of the Greek Christians, which seems to us to be indispensable for subjects of sanctity.

Under this gallery are three monuments, one of which, remarkable for its antiquity, represents Jesus Christ and the Twelve Apostles ranged in file above a row of thurifers.

To make an end of the exterior of Saint Mark's, let us enter the chapel of the baptistery, which is attached to the Cathedral by a door of communication.

The altar is made of a stone brought from Tyre in 1126, by the Doge Domenico Michel; according to tradition it was on this stone that Jesus Christ mounted when he spoke to the Tyrians. We will not discuss this popular opinion. If it is doubtful from the historical point of view, is it not from a poetical standpoint a beautiful idea to have made out of this piece of rock, from which the Reformer, as yet misunderstood, announced the

good news to the multitude, an altar in this temple glistening with gold and radiant with masterpieces? Is it not, in fact, on this humble stone, made divine by the foot of the Celestial Prophet, that all the Cathedrals of the Christian world are founded?

That which forms what the Spaniards call the *retable*, the Italians *la pala*, and the French, *le tableau d'autel*, (altar picture), is a Baptism of Jesus Christ by Saint John, between two angels sculptured in bas-relief. Saint Theodore and Saint George, on horseback, form the pendants on each side, and above, the mosaic work presents a great Crucifixion with the holy women on a field of gold.

The cupola represents Jesus Christ in His glory, surrounded with a great crowd of heads and wings arranged in circles. It shines, palpitates, twinkles, flames, and whirls strangely; archangels, thrones, dominions, virtues, powers, principalities, cherubim, seraphim, crowd their oblong heads together, and their outspread wings are arranged in such a manner as to form an immense rosette of Turkish carpet. At the feet of the Almighty the Devil enchained contorts himself, and Death vanquished cringes before the triumphant Christ.

The following cupola, of very peculiar aspect, shows us the Twelve Apostles each baptizing the Gentiles of a different country. The catechumens, following the ancient custom, are plunged into a tank up to the armpits, and the want of a perspective gives them constrained attitudes and piteous expressions which cause them to resemble baptisms of the condemned. The Apostles, with harsh eyes, hard and sullen features, have the air of executioners and torturers.

Four Doctors of the Church, Saint Jerome, Saint Gregory, Saint Augustine, and Saint Ambrose, occupy the pendentives. The black crosses with which their dalmatics are strewn have something sinister and fune-

real about them. This characteristic is common to the whole chapel. The mosaics, of a great antiquity, the oldest in the church, are of a ferocious barbarity which reveals an implacable and savage Christianity.

In the arch there is a large medallion representing the Christ under a terrible aspect: it is no longer the gentle, meek Christ, the young Nazarene with blue eyes, whom you are familiar with, but a Christ severe and formidable, with a beard which breaks forth in gray waves like that of God the Father, whose age He also has, since Father and Son are co-eternal. The deep wrinkles of all the ages furrow His brow, and His mouth is drawn, ready to launch an anathema; one might fancy that He despaired of the salvation of the world He had saved, or that He repented of His sacrifice.

Siva, the god of destruction, in the subterranean Pagoda of Ellora, could not have had a more menacing or sombre face. Around this vengeful Christ are grouped the prophets who announced his coming.

On the walls the story of Saint John the Baptist is unfolded. There may be seen the angel announcing to Zacharias the birth of the Forerunner; his life in the desert, savagely bristling in a garment made of the skins of wild beasts; the baptism of Jesus Christ in the Jordan, a mosaic which is more Hindu than Byzantine, or rather Carib than Hindu; the dance of Herodias' daughter before Herod; the decapitation and presentation of the head upon a plate of silver, a favorite of Juan Valdes Leal. In these latter pictures the daughter of Herodias, robed in a long dalmatic, recalls the dissolute empresses of Constantinople, those great courtesans of the *Bas-Empire*, — Theodora, for example, — luxurious, lascivious, and cruel. A singular coincidence marks the scene of the festivity: while Herodias' daughter brings the severed head, a carver arrives with a pheasant on a plate, at the other side of the table. This mingling of

cooking and murder produces an effect that is horrible in its naïvete.

The baptismal fonts are of marble with a lid of bronze, the bas-reliefs of which, modeled in 1545 by Desiderio of Florence and Tiziano of Padua, both pupils of Sansovino, recall the principal incidents in the story of Saint John. The statue of the Saint, also of bronze, is by Francesco Segala, and admirably crowns the work. On the wall is fixed the monumental stone of the Doge Andrea Dandolo.

Now let us enter the Basilica. The door is surmounted by a Saint Mark in pontifical garments, after a design of Titian, by the brothers Zuccati, upon whom George Sand based her charming novel of the *Maitres Mosaistes*. This mosaic has a splendor which enables us to understand why jealous rivals accuse the skilful artists of making use of painting instead of confining themselves to their ordinary methods. The interior impost is a Christ between His mother and Saint John the Baptist, of a fine *Bas-Empire* style, imposing and severe, let us say once for all in order not to be obliged to turn our eyes away from the admirable spectacle which is about to present itself to us.

Nothing can compare with Saint Mark's of Venice, — neither Cologne, nor Strasbourg, nor Seville, nor even Cordova with its mosque: it has a surprising and magical effect. The first impression is that of a cavern of gold inerusted with precious stones, splendid and sombre, at the same time sparkling and mysterious. Are we in a building or in an immense jewel-casket? Such is the question one asks oneself.

The cupolas, the arches, the architraves, the walls, are covered with small tubes of gilded crystal, fabricated at Murano, of an unalterable splendor, on which the light glistens as on the scales of a fish and which serve as a field for the imperishable skill of the mosaists.



Where the groundwork of gold stops, at the top of a column, a facing of the most precious and variegated marbles begins. From the vault descends a great lamp in the form of a cross with four branches, of marvelous effect when lighted, an effect which the diorama has rendered popular in France.

The central dome, hollowed out at the intersection of the arms of the Greek cross outlined by the plan of the Basilica, presents in its vast cup Jesus Christ seated on a rainbow, in the midst of a circular space filled with stars and borne up by two couples of seraphim. Beneath Him, the Divine Mother, standing between two angels, adores her Son in His glory, and the Twelve Apostles, each separated from the other by a naïvely executed tree, which symbolizes the Garden of Olives, form with their Master a celestial court; the theological and cardinal virtues are represented between the windows of the little dome which lights the vault; the four evangelists, seated in cabinets in the form of castles, are writing their precious books at the base of the pendentives, the lowest point of which is occupied by emblematic figures engaged in pouring from an urn borne on their shoulders the four rivers of Paradise,—the Tigris, Euphrates, Gehon, and Pison.

Further along in the following cupola, the centre of which is filled with a medallion of the Mother of God, the four familiar beasts of the evangelists, delivered on this occasion from the guardianship of their masters, devote themselves to the protection of the holy manuscript in fantastic and menacing attitudes, and with an abundance of teeth, claws, and big eyes.

At the base of the demi-cupola, which glitters vaguely behind the great altar, the Redeemer is delineated by means of a gigantic and badly proportioned figure, for the purpose of indicating, according to the Byzantine usage, the distance of the Divine Personage from the

feeble creature. Like the Olympian Jove, this Christ, if He were to rise, would carry away the arch of His temple.

The atrium of the Basilica, as we have shown, is filled with scenes from the Old Testament; the interior contains the entire New Testament, with the Apocalypse for epilogue. The Cathedral of Saint Mark is a great adorned, illuminated Bible of gold, a missal of the Middle Ages on a large scale. For eight centuries a city has turned over the leaves of this monument like a picture-book, without growing weary in its pious admiration. Alongside the image is found the text; everywhere inscriptions, legends in Greek and in Latin; leonine verses, Bible verses, sentences, names, monograms, samples of the calligraphy of all countries and all times, mount, descend, encircle. Everywhere the black letter traces its pothooks on the golden page, through the motley of the mosaic; it is even more the temple of the Word than the Church of Saint Mark, an intellectual temple which, without concerning itself with any style of architecture, builds itself with verses of the old and of the new faith, and finds its ornamentation in the exposition of its doctrine.

We will not attempt a detailed description, which would demand a special work, but we would like to describe the dazzling and dizzy impression produced by this world of angels, apostles, prophets, doctors, figures of all kinds who people the cupolas, vaults, tympana, double-arches, pillars, pendentives, the least available piece of wall; there the genealogical tree of the Virgin extends its tufted branches, which bear kings and holy personages for fruits and fills a vast panel with its strange foliation; there shines a Paradise with its glory, its legion of angels and blessed ones. This chapel contains the story of the Virgin; that arch unfolds all the drama of the Passion from the kiss of Judas to the apparition

to the holy women ; and passing through the agonies of the Garden of Olives and of Calvary.

All those who have borne witness for Jesus, whether by prophecy or by martyrdom, are admitted into this great Christian Pantheon. There is Saint Peter crucified with head downward ; Saint Paul beheaded ; Saint Thomas before the Indian King Gondoforus ; Saint Andrew suffering his martyrdom. Not one of the servants of Christ is forgotten, not even Saint Bacchus. Some Greek saints of whom we Latins know little, come to augment this sacred multitude. Saint Phocas, Saint Demetrius, Saint Procopius, Saint Hermagoras, Saint Euphemia, Saint Erasma, Saint Dorothea, Saint Thekla, — all the beautiful exotic flowers of the Greek calendar, which one might believe to have been painted according to the recipes of the manual of painting of the monk d'Aghia-Lavra, bloom upon these trees of gold and of precious stones.

At certain hours, when the shadows thicken and the sun launches but a single ray of oblique light under the arches and the cupolas, strange effects are produced for the eye of the poet and the visionary. Tawny lightnings burst forth suddenly from the background of gold. Little cubes of crystal glisten in places, like the sea under the sun. The contours of the figures tremble in this scintillating network ; the silhouette now so clean-cut, presently becomes blurred and confused to the eye. The stiff folds of the dalmatics seem to nod and to float ; a mysterious life glides into these immobile Byzantine personages ; the fixed eyes move, the arms are agitated with Egyptian gestures, the bound feet begin to walk, the cherubim spread their eight wings ; the angels spread out their long plumes of azure and purple, fastened to the wall by the implacable mosaist ; the genealogical tree rustles its leaves of green marble ; the lion of Saint Mark stretches himself, yawns, licks his paws ; the eagle sharpens his

beak and polishes his plumage; the ox turns over on his litter, and chews his cud, making his dewlap undulate; the martyrs raise themselves from their gridirons, or detach themselves from their crosses; the prophets converse with the evangelists; the doctors make remarks to the young women saints, who laugh with their lips of porphyry; the personages of the mosaic become processions of phantoms who ascend and descend the walls, move around in the galleries and pass before you, shaking the golden chevelure of their nimbus. It is a bewilderment, a vertigo, an hallucination!

The real meaning of the Cathedral, a meaning profound, mysterious, solemn, then seems to appear. One might affirm that this is the temple of a Christianity anterior to Christ, a church made before the religion. The ages reeде in the infinite perspective. This Trinity, is it not a trimurti? This Virgin, does she hold on her knees Horus or Krishna? Is this Isis or Parvati? This figure on the cross, does it suffer the passion of Jesus, or the trials of Vishnu? Are we in Egypt or in India, in the temple of Karnak or the Pagoda of Jugger-naut? Do these figures in constrained poses differ much from the procession of colored hieroglyphies which wind around the pylones or bury themselves in the syringas.

When the eyes are turned from the arch toward the ground, we perceive on the left the little chapel erected to the painting of a miraculous Christ, which having been struck by a profane hand, emitted blood. Its dome, supported by columns of an extreme rareness, two of which are of white and black porphyry, has for its crown a ball formed of an agate which is probably the largest in the world.

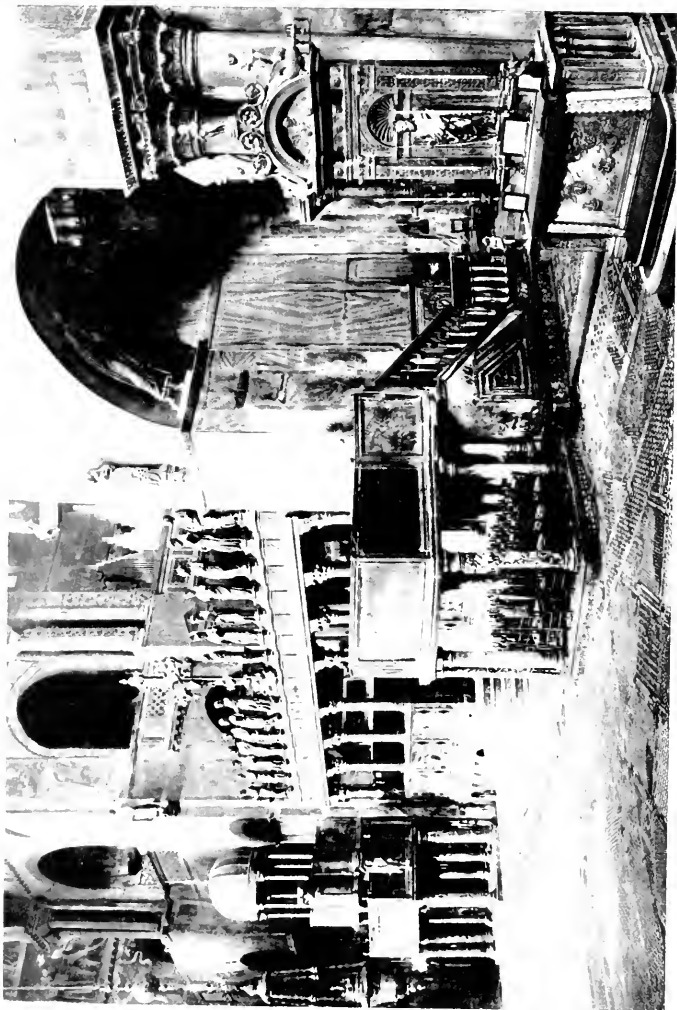
In the background the choir spreads out, with its balustrade, its columns of porphyry, its row of statues sculptured by the Massegua brothers, and its great cross of metal by Jacopo Benato; its two pulpits of col-

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*VENICE*

*St. Mark's — Presbytery and Pulpits*









ored marble, and its altar of which one catches a glimpse under a dais between four columns of Greek marble, chiseled like Chinese ivory by patient hands which have inscribed the whole story of the Old Testament in figures a few inches in height.

We should need more space than we have at our disposal to describe in detail the chapel of Saint Clement, of the Virgin *dei Mascoli*, where there is a magnificent altar picture by Nicolas Pisano, and marvels of art which one encounters at every corner.

At one time it is a Madonna with its Bambino of alabaster of an exquisite sweetness, at another a bas-relief of charming workmanship, in which peacocks form a nimbus of their tails; or a disc of enameled arabesques, a pair of bronze candelabras of a chiseling that would discourage Benvenuto Cellini, or some curious or venerable object of art or of devotion.

The paving of mosaic, which undulates like a sea, offers the most wonderful medley of arabesques, foliage, flower-work, lozenges, tessellatings, cranes, griffins, chimeras winged, clawed, rampant, or climbing, like the monsters of the heraldic art. One is really confounded by the creative faculty displayed by man in this fantasy of decoration. It is a whole world as varied, as swarming, as the other, and which takes its forms from itself.

What time, care, patience, and genius, what expense throughout eight centuries has been necessary to complete this immense aggregation of riches and masterpieces! How many golden sequins have been melted in the glass of the mosaics! How many antique temples and mosques have yielded their columns to support these cupolas! What numbers of quarries have exhausted their veins for these flag-stones, these pillars, and these facings of brocatelles of Verona, marbles of all colors, of alabaster, of veined granite, of mosaic granite, of red porphyry, of black and white porphyry, of serpentine, and of jasper!

What armies of artists succeeding each other from generation to generation, have designed, chiseled, sculptured, in this Cathedral! Not to mention the unknown, the humble workmen of the Middle Ages, whom the night of time covers, who are buried in their works, what a list of names could be prepared worthy to be inscribed in the golden book of Art!

Among the painters who have furnished designs for the mosaics, for there is not a single picture in Saint Mark's, one reckons Titian, Tintoretto, Palma the Paduan, Salviati, Aliensi, Pilotti, Sabastien Rizzi, Tizianello; among the master mosaists, — at the head of whom must be placed the elder Petrus, author of the colossal Christ which occupies the centre of the church, — the brothers Zuccati, Bozza, Vincenzo Bianchini, Luigi Gaetano, Michael Zambono, Giacomo Passerini; among the sculptors, — all men of an extraordinary talent and of whom it is astonishing that they are not better known, — Pierre Lombard, Campanato, Zuanne Alberghetti, Paolo Savi, the brothers Masegna, Jacopo Benato, Sansovino, Pier-Zuana delle Campane, Lorenzo Bregghno, and a thousand others, a single one of whom would suffice for the glory of an epoch.

Saint Mark's, although we may not be living in a very devout age, always has in some corner a little group of faithful ones who are hearing mass, or isolated devotees who are praying before a special saint or some beloved or privileged Madonna.

The old women abound as everywhere; but there are also young women there whose fervor is not less, who kiss the feet of the statues, pass their hands over the images, tracing a cross, and who gather up with their lips the atoms of sanctity amassed by their fingers, — respectable puerilities, the childishness of a living faith, at which one may laugh, but which is nevertheless touching.

There are some of these images of hardest marble,

those which repel the chisel of the sculptor, which have melted and fused like wax under the ardor and persistence of these kisses !

In front of the church rise the three standards which bore the banners of the Republic, supported by the bronze pedestals by Alessandro Leopardo representing marine divinities, chimeras of an exquisite workmanship and an admirable polish.

These three standards symbolized in the days of old the kingdoms of Cyprus, Candia, and Morea, the three maritime possessions of Venice.



## CHAPTER X

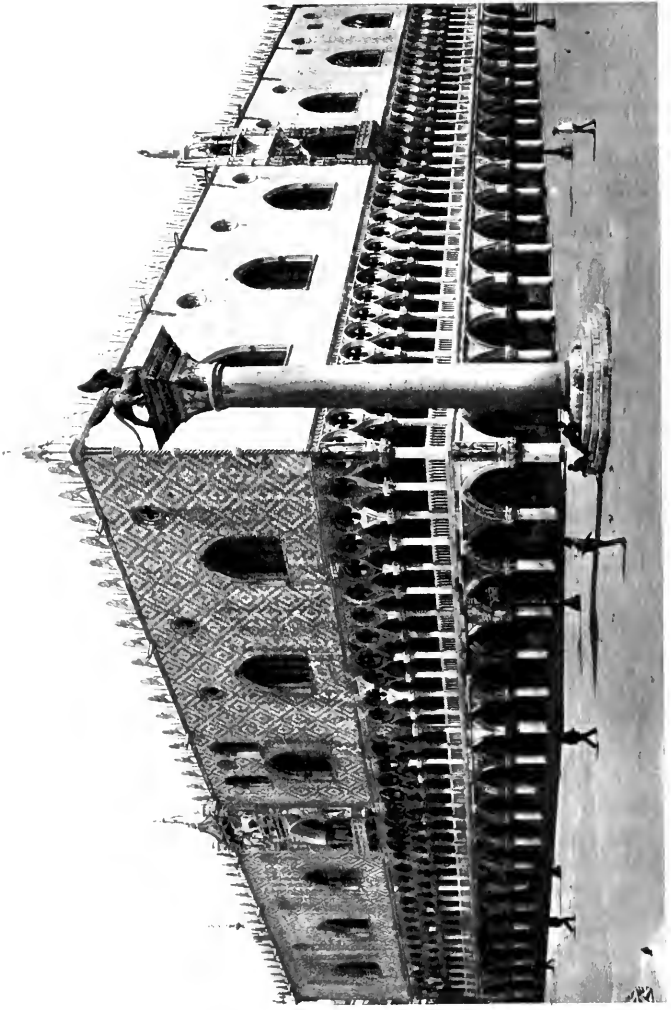
### THE DUCAL PALACE.

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**T**HE Ducal Palace, in the form in which we see it to-day, dates from the time of Marino Faliero, and is the successor of a more ancient one, begun in 819, under Angelo Participazio, and continued by the various doges. It was Marino Faliero who caused to be built in 1355 the two façades which look toward the Mole and the *Piazzetta*. This construction brought good fortune neither to him who gave the order nor to the architect: the one was beheaded and the other hanged. It is, however, unfortunate for the parallelism of the legend that the architect of the Palace should not have been Philippe Calendario, as has hitherto been believed, but Pietro Bassagio, as is proven by a document discovered by the Abbe Cadorin. However, the story has a chance of being investigated anew. Calendario worked on the sculptures of the capitals of the first gallery, which are masterpieces of arabesque and ornamentation; this thread suffices to connect his hanging with the sinister influence of the Ducal Palace.

One enters into this strange edifice — at the same time palace, senate-house, judgment hall and prison under the government of the Republic — by a charming door at the corner of Saint Mark's, between the pillars of Saint John of Acre and the enormous stocky column which supports the immense weight of the white and rose marble wall, which gives so much originality to the aspect of the Palace of the Doges. This door, called *Della Carta*, of a charming style of architecture, adorned with small columns, with trefoils and statues, without reckoning the inevitable winged lion and the Saint







## VENICE

*Ducal Palace. (By John, Bartholomew, and Pantaleo Bon)*



Mark *de rigueur*, conducts by an arched passage into the great interior Court; this somewhat peculiar arrangement of an entrance which is separated from the edifice to which it leads, has the advantage of not disturbing in any way the unity of the façades, nor any projection except that of the monumental windows.

Before passing under its arch let us glance at the exterior of the Palace in order to notice some interesting details. Above the big and robust column of which we have spoken, there is a bas-relief of gloomy aspect representing the Judgment of Solomon, with the costumes of the Middle Ages and a certain barbarity of execution which makes the subject difficult of recognition. It is on this bas-relief that the long twisted columnette which winds about each angle of the edifice abuts. At the opposite corner, on the side toward the sea, Adam and Eve are to be seen, decently clothed in fig-leaves, and at the corner which indents the Bridge of *la Paille*, the patriarch Noah, whose nakedness Shem and Japhet are covering, while Ham, the disrespectful son, is sneering in a corner at the return of the wall. The old man's arms, treated with a fine Gothic sharpness, show all the muscles and veins.

At the façade of the *Piazzetta*, at the second tier of galleries, two columns of red marble mark the place where sentences of death were read, a custom which still exists to-day. The thirteenth capital of the lower gallery, going out from Saint Mark's, is very highly praised and contains in eight compartments that number of epochs of human life, very finely rendered. All the capitals, however, are of an exquisite taste and wonderful variety. Not one repeats itself. They contain chimeras, children, angels, fantastic animals, sometimes from subjects taken from the Bible or from history, mingled with foliage of the acanthus, fruits, and flowers which make wonderfully evident the poverty of inven-

tion of our modern architects; several bear half-effaced inscriptions in Gothic characters, which would need a skilful paleographer in order to read them fluently; seventeen arcades may be counted on the Mole, and eighteen on the *Piazzetta*.

The door of *Della Curta* leads to the Stairway of the Giants, which has nothing of the gigantic in itself, but which takes its name from two colossal figures of Neptune and of Mars, of a dozen feet in height, by Sansovino, posed on pedestals at the top of the steps. This stairway, leading from the floor of the Court to the second gallery, which extends to the interior as well as the exterior of the Palace, was built under the rule of Doge Agostino Barbarigo, by Antonio Rizzio. It is of white marble, and decorated by Dominique and Bernardin of Mantua, with arabesques and trophies of a perfection which has been the despair of all the decorators, chisellers, and enameled of the world. It is no longer architecture, it is the art of the silversmith such as Benvenuto Cellini and Veehta alone could execute.

Each bit of this carved balustrade is a world of invention; the arms and helmets of each bas-relief, all dissimilar, are of the rarest fantasy and purest style. Even the steps are enameled with exquisite ornamentations, and yet who is acquainted with Dominique and Bernardin of Mantua? Human memory, already wearied with a hundred illustrious names, refuses to retain them and leaves to oblivion names which merit lasting fame.

At the base of this stairway are situated, at the place where the knobs of the rail are usually located, two baskets of fruit, worn away by the hands of those who ascend. One of those lively characters who find a malicious intent in everything, asserts that these baskets of fruit signified the state of maturity which ought to belong to those who went to the Senate house to discuss the affairs of the Republic. Dominique and Bernardin,

were they to return to earth, would doubtless be greatly surprised at the profound meaning which *Æstheticism* has attached to the marble carved by them without thought on their part for anything but its beauty, humble and great artists that they were. The statues of Neptune and Mars, in spite of their great height and the exaggerated swelling of their muscles, as a matter of fact are somewhat lacking in vigor when considered as a whole ; but as far as architecture is concerned, they hold their place in a lofty and majestic fashion. The plinth bears the name of the artist, whom we consider to have done better work in his statuettes of apostles and his door of the sacristy at Saint Mark's.

Arrived at the top of this stairway, turning about, one has before him the inner façade of the door of Bartholomew, all decorated with columnettes and with statues, with remains of blue painting starred with gold in the tympana of the arches. Among the statues, one in particular is very remarkable. It is an Eve, by Antonio Rizzio of Verona, sculptured in 1471. A certain Gothic timidity still rules in her charming lines, and her modest pose recalls with an adorable awkwardness the attitude of the Venus de Medici, that pagan Eve who holds in her hand a leaf of the absent fig-tree.

The artists prior to the Renaissance, who had few occasions to deal with the nude, put into it a sort of pudic embarrassment and infantine naïveté which pleases us extremely. The other face which looks toward the cisterns was built in 1607 in Renaissance style, with columns and niches enclosing antique statues which came from Greece and which represent warriors, orators, and divinities. A clock and a statue of the Duke Urbino, sculptured by Gio Bandini of Florence, in 1625, completes this severe and classic façade.

In permitting your eyes to wander toward the middle of the Court, you perceive what are apparently magnificent

bronze altars. They are in reality the mouths of cisterns of Nicolo de Conti and of Francesco Alberghetti. The one dates from 1556, the other from 1559. Both are chefs-d'œuvre. They represent, beside the necessary accompaniment of griffins, sirens, and chimeras, different aquatic subjects drawn from Scripture.

The richness of invention, the exquisite taste, the perfection of chiseling, the finish of the work of these curbs of pits, which are enhanced by the polish and rust of time, cannot be imagined. Even the interior of the mouth, garnished with plates of bronze, is decorated with a damask of arabesques. These two cisterns are supposed to contain the best water in Venice. They are also very much frequented, and the ropes which draw the buckets have worn grooves on the brass border two or three inches in depth.

Nowhere in Venice will you find a place more propitious for the study of the interesting class of water-carriers whose beauty is celebrated, in our opinion, somewhat undeservedly, since, for a few pretty ones we have seen many who were old and ugly. Their costume is quite characteristic. Their heads are covered with a man's hat of black felt, and they are clothed in a great petticoat of black cloth, which mounts up to their armpits, like an Empire waist; their feet are bare as well as their legs, though sometimes clothed with a cut-off stocking, after the fashion of the peasants of Huerta in Valencia. A chemisette of coarse muslin, folded on the breast and with short sleeves, completes the costume. They carry the water on their shoulders in two buckets of red leather. The majority of these women are Tyroliennes.

At the moment when we stopped at the top of the stairway, there was leaning upon the bronze edge of the Cistern of Nicolo de Conti, one of these Tyrolean women who drew up with considerable effort, for she was

small and delicate, one of these buckets full of water. Her neck bent downward allowed to be seen, under her masculine hat, a twisted fringe of pretty blonde hair and the beginning of fairly white shoulders where the sunburn had not yet entirely melted the snow of the mountain. A painter would have made it the subject of an agreeable genre picture. We much prefer the Spanish and African habit of carrying the water on the head in a balanced amphora, to that of walking bowed down between two buckets. The women there assume a nobility of bearing that is astonishing. But this is enough on the subject of female water-carriers.

Near the Stairway of the Giants is to be seen an inscription framed in ornamentations and figurines by Alessandro Vittoria, which recalls the journey of Henry III to Venice, and, further on, at the entrance to the golden staircase in the gallery, two statues by Antonio Aspetti, Hercules and Atlas bending under the starry firmament, the weight of which the robust hero is about to carry on his ox-like shoulders. This stairway, very magnificent, adorned with stuccos by Vittoria and paintings by Giambatisto, is by Sansovino, and leads to the Library, which now occupies many halls of the Palace of the Doges; to attempt to describe them one by one would be a labor of patience and of erudition which would demand a volume and which would be more fitting in a special guide-book than in a book of travels.

The ancient hall of the Great Council is one of the largest in existence. The Court of the Lions and that of the Alhambra could be put into it with ease. Upon entering, one is overcome with amazement. By an effect very frequent in architecture, this hall seems much larger than the structure in which it is enclosed. A solemn and severe wainscoting, where bookcases have replaced the stalls of the old Senators, serves for a plinth with immense paintings which unfold themselves

all around the wall, interrupted only by the windows, under a row of portraits of Doges, and a colossal ceiling entirely gilded, with an incredible lavishness and exuberance of ornamentation, with great compartments, square, octagonal, oval, with flowers, volutes, and rockwork in a taste not very appropriate to the style of the Palace, but so grandiose and magnificent that one is dazzled by it.

Unfortunately, by reason of indispensable repairs, the canvases of Paul Veronese, of Tintoretto, of Palma the younger, and other great masters which filled these superb frames have been removed for the present.

We greatly regretted not being able to admire that personification of Venice by Paul Veronese, so radiant and spirited, and which seems the very incarnation of the genius of that great master.

One of the sides of the hall, that of the door of entrance, is entirely occupied by a gigantic Paradise by Tintoretto, which contains a whole world of figures. The sketch of an analogous subject, which may be seen in the Museum of the Louvre, in Paris, furnishes an idea of their composition, the genre of which pleased the fiery and tumultuous genius of this virile artist, who fitted so so well his name — Jacopo Robusti. It is, in fact, a robust picture and it is a pity that time should have so greatly obscured it. The smoky shadows which cover it make it almost as appropriate for an inferno as for a Paradise.

Behind this canvas, a circumstance which we have not been able to verify, exists, it is said, an ancient Paradise painted on the wall in green cameo, by Guariento of Padua, in the year 1365. It would be interesting to be able to compare that green Paradise with this black Paradise. It is only Venice which has paintings two layers deep.

This hall is a kind of museum of Venetian history, like that at Versailles, with this difference, that if the exploits are of less magnitude, the painting is better. Here the

subjects of the pictures are for the greater part of enormous dimensions ; Pope Alexander III received by the Doge Ziani ; the Pope giving the *horn* to the Doge (which is the name given the ducal hat, from which, in fact, a curved beak issues) ; the Ambassadors presenting themselves to Emperor Frederic Barbarossa, at Pavia, by Tintoretto ; the Pope giving the baton of Marshal to the Doge who is embarking on his ship, by Fiamingo ; Otho, son of Frederic, made prisoner by the Venetians, by Tintoretto ; Otho treating for peace with the Pope ; Frederic and the Pope, by F. Zuccato ; arrival of the Pope, Emperor, and Doge, at Ancona, by Girolamo Gambarete ; the Pope offering gifts to the Doge in Saint Peter's at Rome, by Giulio del Moro ; the return of the Doge Andrea Contarini, conqueror of the Genoese, in 1378, by Paul Veronese, in his old age, but still worthy of the master ; Baldwin elected Emperor at Constantinople in the Church of Saint Sophia, by A. Vincentino ; Baldwin crowned as Emperor by the Doge Enrico Dandolo, by Aliense ; Constantinople taken for the first time by the Venetians, having at their head the old Dandolo, by Palma the younger, and for the second time by the Venetians allied with the Crusaders in 1204, by Andrea Vincentino ; Alexis, son of the Emperor Isaac, invoking the protection of the Venetians in favor of his father ; the assault of Zara, by Vincentino ; the taking of Zara, by Tintoretto ; the league of the Doge Dandolo with the Crusaders in the Church of Saint Mark, by Jean Leclerc ; without considering the allegorical figures of Aliense and of Marco Vecellio, lodged in the embrasures, the corners, and the imposts, which could not hold great historical compositions.

A more marvelous *coup d'œil* could not be imagined than this immense hall entirely covered with these lofty paintings in which Venetian genius, the most skilful in its arrangement of great mechanical compositions, excels.

From all parts the velvets shimmer, the silk rustles, the taffeta palpitates, the brocade of gold displays its grained embroidery, the precious stones make bosses; the cuirasses and helmets, fantastically chiseled, are frosted with light and shade and launch forth their splendors like mirrors; the interstices of the white columns are padded with the blue sky peculiar to Venice, and on the steps of the marble staircases are elevated groups of pompous Senators, of men-at-arms, of patricians and pages, the usual *personnel* of the Venetian pictures.

In the paintings of battles there is an inextricable chaos of galleys with three-storied castles, mainsails, topsails, three banks of oars, towers, machines of war, and overturned ladders throwing down their clusters of men; an astonishing mixture of overseers, of galley-slaves, convict keepers, convicts, sailors, and men-at-arms, overwhelming their enemies with sledge-hammers, cutlasses, and barbaric engines of war, some naked to the girdle, others clothed in a peculiar armor, or in Oriental costumes of a fanciful and uncouth style, like those of the Turks of Rembrandt; all this swarms and struggles on backgrounds of smoke and flame, or on the waves lashed into foam. It is unfortunate for many of these paintings that time has added its smoke to that of the combat; but if the eye loses on this account, the imagination gains by it. The years give more than they take away from the paintings upon which they work. Many of the masterpieces owe a portion of their merit to the rust with which centuries have gilded them.

Above these great historic compositions winds a row of portraits of the Doges by Tintoretto, Bassan, and other painters. In a corner the eye is arrested by a blackened and empty frame which makes a gap, sombre as a tomb, in this chronological gallery. It is the place which the portrait of Marino Faliero was to have oc-



cupied and which bears this inscription : “ *Locus Marini Phaletri, decapitati pro criminibus.* ”

All likenesses of Marino Faliero were likewise destroyed in a manner such as to make his portrait impossible to be found ; it is claimed, however, that one exists in the possession of an amateur in Verona. The Republic would have liked to suppress the memory of this proud old man who brought it to the verge of ruin. To finish with Marino Faliero, let us state that he was not beheaded at the top of the Stairway of the Giants, as he is represented to have been in some prints, for the reason that this stairway was only built 150 years later, but at the opposite corner, at the other end of the gallery, on a landing-place since demolished. Upon emerging on the balcony of the great window, one sees, besides the perspective of Saint George Major and the Giudecca, a pretty statuette of Saint George by Canova, while he was still studying with the sculptor Toretti, and which we prefer to his standard works.

We propose to enumerate, without pretending to describe them, the more celebrated halls of the Palace. The chamber *dei Scarlatti* : the chimney-piece is covered with reliefs in marble of the finest workmanship. There is also to be seen here a very curious bas-relief of marble representing the Doge Loredano on his knees before the Virgin and Child, in company with several saints, the admirable work of an unknown artist.

The Hall of the Shield : It is here that the armor of the living Doge was emblazoned ; it is hung with maps by the Abbe Grisellini, which recount the discoveries of Marco Polo, so long regarded as fabulous, and of other illustrious Venetian voyagers, such as Zeni and Cabot.

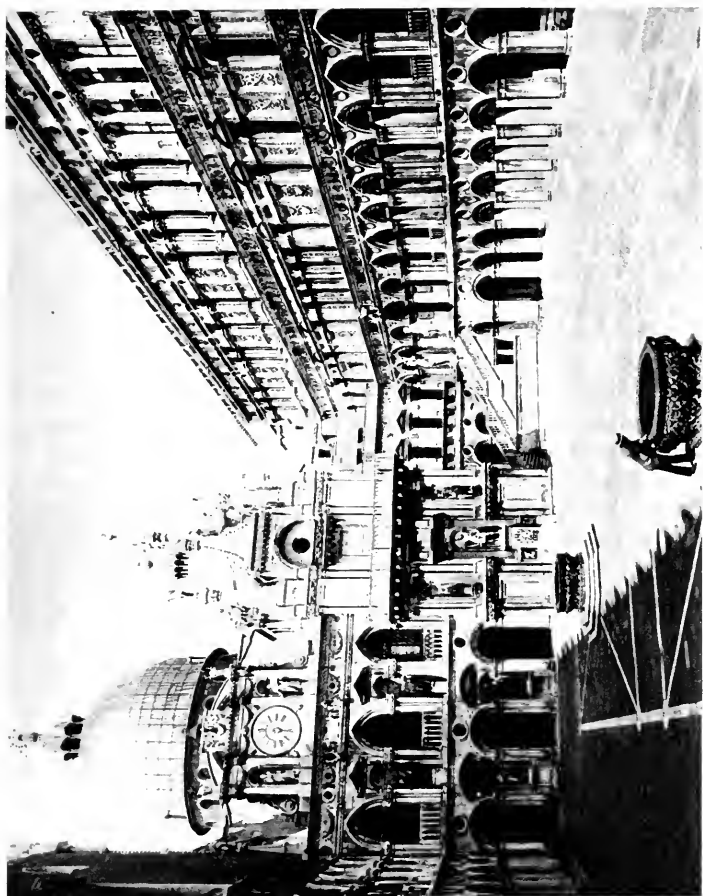
A map of the world, carved on wood, discovered on a Turkish galley, is preserved here ; it is of an irregular configuration, according to Oriental ideas, and all bedizened with Arab letters cut with a wonderful delicacy ;

and a great bird's-eye view of Venice, the prototype of which is to be found at the *Correr* museum, by Albert Durer, who lived for a long time in the City of the Doges. This great artist, at the same time so fantastic and so correct, who introduced the chimera into mathematics, retraced the City of Gold, — the *citta d'oro* Petrarch named it, — as it was at that epoch, with scrupulous detail and strange caprice. He has placed in the sea, between the *Piazzetta* and Saint George's, a symbolic Neptune, head decked with madrepores, surrounded by sea rushes, all bristling, all scaly, striking the water with fins like claws and shaking a beard cut like the mantle of German heraldry. Four winds, with distended cheeks, indicate the four cardinal points of the compass. Weird craft, galleys, galleasses, bombs, boats, organs, flutes, caracs, ships of all kinds, plough a sea chopped into little waves, where dolphins leap from the yawning depths. In this map the Campanile is not yet supplied with its sharp-pointed steeple; it is a simple tower. The *Zecca* and the Library have not the form which they have to-day. The Customhouse is in its place, of different construction, but the church *Della Salute* does not exist. At the place where somewhat later the Rialto rises to view, there is a wooden bridge furnished with planks, the center of which is occupied by a platform which is raised by chains. In general, the aspect of the city is the same, since for three centuries not a single stone has been placed upon another in the cities of Italy.

Continuing the nomenclature, we call attention next to the Hall of the Philosophers, in which a very beautiful chimney-piece by Pierre Lombard is to be noticed. The Hall of the Stuccos, so named on account of its ornamentation: It contains paintings by Salviati, Pordenone, and Bassan; the Virgin, a Descent from the Cross, and the Nativity of Jesus Christ. The Banquet Hall: It was here that the Doge gave certain diplomatic

**VENICE**  
*The Court of the Ducal Palace*







banquets, the state dinners, as we should call them to-day. A portrait of Henry III may be seen there, by Tintoretto, very fine, and very vigorous, and, facing the door, the Adoration of the Magi, a warm painting by Bonifazio, that great master, of whose work we have almost nothing in Paris. The Hall of the Four Doors: This is preceded by a square salon, the ceiling of which, painted by Tintoretto, represents Justice, who is giving the sword and scales to the Doge Priuli.

The four doors are decorated with statues of a grand tournure by Giulio del Moro, Francesco Caselli, Girolamo Campagna, Alessandra Vittoria; the paintings by which it is enriched are masterpieces: The Doge Marino Grimani kneeling before the Holy Virgin with Saint Mark and other saints, by Contarini, is admirable; the Doge Antonio Grimani in like attitude before the figure of Faith, by Titian, a blonde and superb painting which loses nothing of its effect by reason of the simplicity of its style. Opposite, Carletto Cagliari has painted the Doge Cicogna receiving the Ambassadors from Persia, a charming opportunity for brocades, turbans, aigrettes, and strings of pearls for an artist of the school and family of Paul Veronese.

An immense piece by André Michel, called the *Vincentino*, represents the arrival of Henry III at the Lido of Venice, where he is received by the Doge Mocenigo, the Patriarch, and the magistrates, under the triumphal arch raised for the occasion, according to designs by Palladio. This great composition has the opulent and gorgeous aspect common to all the paintings of the best days of the Venetian school created to paint luxury.

A picture of the same Carlo Cagliari, representing the Doge giving audience to the Ambassadors of State, completes the symmetry. The compartments of the ceiling are the work of Palladio, the stuccos are by Vittoria and Bombarda, according to the designs of Sansovino; a

Venice by Tintoretto, conducted by Jupiter upon the Adriatic, in the midst of a cortege of divinities, occupies the central compartment. .

Let us pass from this hall into the *Anti-Collegio*, which is the waiting-room of the Ambassadors; the architecture is that of Scamozzi. The envoys of the various Powers who came to present their letters accrediting them to the most serene Republic could not expect immediate admittance; the masterpieces enshrined in this splendid antechamber have about them that which ought to have made them wait patiently. The four paintings placed near the door are by Tintoretto, and are among his best. We know among his works, of equal strength, only the Adam and Eve, and the Cain and Abel of the Academy of Fine Arts. The following are the subjects: Mercury and the Graces; The Forges of Vulcan; Pallas, accompanied by Joy and Abundance which drive away Mars; Ariadne consoled by Bacchus. Apart from some foreshortening a trifle forced and some violent attitudes, the difficulty of which was pleasing to this master, one can but praise the vigorous energy of touch, the warmth of the coloring, the naturalness of the flesh tints, the power of life and that virile and charming grace which characterizes his great talent for rendering agreeable subjects.

But the marvel of this sanctuary of art is the *Enlèvement d'Europe*, by Paul Veronese. The beautiful young woman is seated, as upon a throne of silver, on the back of the Divine Bull about to plunge in the blue sea which endeavors to reach with its amorous billows the feet which Europa lifts in infantine fear of wetting them—an ingenious detail of the metamorphosis which the painter took care not to forget. The companions of Europa, not knowing that a god is hiding himself under the noble form of this beautiful yet so gentle and familiar animal, flock to the shore and throw him garlands of



flowers, not suspecting that Europa, so carried off, is about to give her name to a Continent and become the mistress of Zeus with the black eyebrows and ambrosial locks. What beautiful white shoulders! What a blonde neck with twisted plaits of hair! What round and charming arms! What a smile of eternal youth in that marvelous canvas in which Paul Veronese seems to have uttered his final word! Sky, clouds, trees, flowers, earth, seas, flesh, draperies, all seem steeped in the light of an unknown elysium. All is fresh and glowing as youth, seductive as voluptuousness, calm and pure as strength; there is no mannerism in this grace, nothing unhealthy in this radiant joyousness. In front of this canvas—and it is a great eulogy for Watteau—we thought of the Departure for Cythera; only, for the brilliancy of the lamps of the opera must be substituted the splendid day of the Orient; for the roguish puppets of the Regency, in robes of rumpled taffeta, the superb bodies in which Greek beauty becomes pliant under Venetian voluptuousness.

If it were given us to choose a single piece from all the works of Paul Veronese, this is the one we should prefer: it is the most beautiful pearl of this rich casket.

On the ceiling, the great artist has caused his dear Venice to be seated on a throne of gold, with that abundant grace of which he possesses the secret. For this Assumption, in which Venice takes the place of the Virgin, he always knows where to find azure and new rays.

A magnificent chimney-piece by Aspetti, a cornice in stucco by Vittoria and Bombarda, some blue cameos by Sebastian Rizzi, some columns of cipolin and *verd antique* framing the doorway, complete that marvelous decoration in which shines forth a luxuriousness the most beautiful of all, the luxuriousness of genius!

The Reception, or College Hall, next presents itself. We find there Tintoretto and Paul Veronese, the one rough and violent, the other azure and calm ; the first works on the great sides of the wall, the other on the immense ceiling. Tintoretto has painted in this hall the Doge Andrea Grifi supplicating the Madonna and the Bambino, the marriage of Saint Catherine together with divers saints and the Doge Dona ; the Holy Virgin under a canopy, with the necessary accompaniment of angels, saints and dogs, and the Redeemer adored by the Doge Luigi Mocenigo. On the other side, Paul Veronese has represented Christ Enthroned, having at his side Venice personified, Faith, and some angels who are stretching forth their hands to Sebastian Venier, then Doge, who gained the famous victory over the Turks at Cursolari, on Saint Justine's day, who is herself introduced into the picture ; the famous proveditore Agostino Barbarigo, slain in this combat, and the two side figures of Saint Sebastian and Saint Justine in cameos on a gray ground, the former alluding to the name of the conqueror, the latter to the date of the victory.

The ceiling, which is magnificent, contains in its compartments the complete deification of Venice by Paul Veronese, to whom this subject was particularly delightful. The first compartment shows us Venice powerful on land and on sea ; the second, Venice upholding religion ; the third, Venice, the friend of Peace, and not fearing War ; the whole, symbolized with force, allegories of grand air and spirited tourture, on ground of fleecy clouds, permitting a turquoise sky occasionally to be seen. As if this apotheosis were not enough, Venice figures again above the window, crown on head and sceptre in hand, painted by Carletto Cagliari.

We will not speak of the cameos, the grisailles, the columns of *verd antique*, the arches of flowered jasper

and the sculptures of G. Campagna. We could never make an end, and they are the commonplace magnificences of the Palace of the Doges.

We feel that we are prolonging this catalogue unduly in spite of ourselves, but at every step a masterpiece tugs at the skirt of our coat as we pass and demands a sentence from us. There is no resisting it. Not being able to speak of all, we must permit your imagination to do some work. There are still in the Ducal Palace other admirable halls than those we have mentioned, — the Hall of the Council of Ten, the Hall of the Supreme Council, the Hall of the State Inquisitors, and others besides. On their ceilings and their walls, the Apotheosis of Venice and the Assumption of the Virgin elbow each other; the doges on their knees before one or other of these Madonnas by the side of mythological heroes and fabled gods; the lion of St. Mark is jostled by the eagle of Jupiter, the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa by a Neptune, the Pope Alexander III by a short-skirted Allegory; mingled with these, stories from the Bible, holy Virgins under canopies, conquests of Zara, enameled with more episodes than a song of Ariosto, surprises of Candia and capitulations of Turks, sculptured door-frames, embellished cornices of stucco and moulding. Erect statues in every corner; gild everything that is not touched by the brush of a superior artist; say to yourself, “All those who have labored here, even the obscure, have twenty times as much talent as the celebrities of our day, and the greatest masters have worn out their lives here”; then you will have a feeble idea of all these magnificences which defy description. As architects, Antonio da Ponte, Peter Lombard; as painters, Titian, Paul Veronese, Tintoretto, Carlo Cagliari, Bonifazio, Vivarini, J. Palma, Aliense, Contarini, le Moro, le Vicentino, the whole band of the Bassans, Zuccari, Marco Vecellio, le Ba-

zacco, Zelotti, Gambareto, Bozzato, Salviati, Malombra, Montemezzano, and Tiepolo, that charming painter, great master of the Decadence, under whose brush expired the beautiful Venetian school, exhausted by chefs-d'œuvre ; as sculptors and ornamentators, Vittoria, Aspetti, Fr. Segala, Girolamo Campagna, Bombarda, Pietro di Salo, have buried in these halls a genius, an invention, a skill which is incomparable.

Painters whose names are not uttered once in a century stand their ground there in the most terrible neighborhoods. One might say that genius was in the air at that climacteric epoch of the human race, and that nothing was easier to accomplish than masterpieces. The sculptors especially, who are never mentioned, display an extraordinary talent and yield not at all to the greatest illustrations of painting.

Near the door of one of these halls can still be seen, but despoiled of all its prestige of terror and reduced to the state of a letter-box without employment, the ancient lion's mouth into which the informers threw their denunciations. It is now only a hole in the wall, the mouth has been torn away.

A sombre corridor leads you from the Hall of the State Inquisition to the Sinks and Pits, a text for an infinity of sentimental declamations. Certainly it was not a beautiful prison ; but the truth is that the Sinks were great chambers covered with lead, the material of which the majority of the roofs of the buildings of Venice are covered, and which has nothing especially cruel about it, and that the Pits in nowise plunge under the lagune. We visited two or three of these dungeons. We expected to see architectural phantasmagoria in the style of Piranese ; arches, stocky pillars, winding staircases, complicated gratings, enormous rings fitted into monstrous blocks ; air-holes permitting a greenish daylight to filter through upon a damp flagstone, and we

wished we might be conducted by a jailer in a cap of fox-skin adorned with its tail, and making the bunches of keys at his girdle jingle. A venerable guide, with the face of the door-keeper of the *Marais*, preceded us, a candle in his hand, through dark, narrow passages.

The dungeon, with wooden floors on the interior, has a low door and a small opening made opposite the lamp hung on the ceiling of the passageway. A wooden camp-bed occupied one of the corners.

It was stuffy and black, but without melodramatic appliances. A philanthropist arranging a dungeon cell could not have done worse. On the walls, some of the inscriptions may be deciphered, which the ennui of the prisoners engraved with a nail on the walls of their tomb; there are some signatures, dates, short sentences from the Bible, philosophical reflections suited to the place, a timid sigh for liberty, sometimes the cause of the imprisonment, — like the inscription in which a captive says that he was incarcerated for sacrilege, having given something to eat to a corpse. We were shown at the entrance to a corridor a stone seat on which those who were secretly executed in the prison were made to sit. A slender rope, thrown round the neck and twisted in the manner of a garrote, strangled them in the Turkish fashion. The clandestine executions took place only in the case of State prisoners convicted of political crimes. The deed done, the corpse was placed in a gondola by a door which opens on the Canal *de la Paille* and was allowed to drift seaward, a ball or stone on its feet, into the Canal Orfanello, which is very deep and in which fishermen were forbidden to cast their lines.

The common assassins were executed between the two columns, at the entrance to the *Piazzetta*. The Bridge of Sighs which, seen from the Bridge of *la Paille*, has the air of a cenotaph suspended over the

water, has nothing remarkable in the interior; it is a double corridor separated by a wall which leads under cover from the Ducal Palace to the Prison, a severe and solid edifice by Antonio da Ponte, situated on the other side of the Canal, and which looks toward the lateral façade of the Palace, which is presumed to have been built according to plans of Antonio Riccio. The name Bridge of Sighs given to this tomb, which connects two prisons, is derived probably from the cries of the unfortunates journeying from their dungeon to the judgment hall and from the judgment hall to their dungeon, bruised by torture, or despairing on account of having been condemned.

In the evening this canal, compressed between the high walls of the two sombre edifices, lighted by some infrequent gleam, has a sinister and very mysterious air, and the gondola which glides by, carrying some loving couple going to breathe the fresh air of the lagoon, has the appearance of carrying a burden for the Orfano Canal.

We also visited the ancient apartments of the doge; there is nothing remaining of the former magnificence, unless it be a highly ornamented ceiling divided into hexagonal compartments gilded and painted. In these compartments, under cover of the foliage and rose-work, was contrived an invisible hole through which the Inquisitors of State and the members of the Council of Ten could spy out at all hours of the day and of the night what the doge was doing at home.

The wall, not content with listening with the ear, like the prison of Denis le Tyran, watched with an eye always open, and the doge, victor at Zara or at Candia, heard like Angelo "steps in his wall" and felt circulating about him a mysterious and jealous espionage. We also saw the antique statues transported from the Library of Sansovino to the Ducal Palace.

*VENICE*

*Bridge of Sighs, built by Antonio da Ponte*









There is a charming group of Leda and the Swan; she still resists, but so feebly, with a virtue so lax and a refusal so provoking, that already the Divine Bird has surrounded her with his wing as with a nuptial curtain.

A halt must also be made before a bas-relief of children, in Parian marble, of the best days of Greek sculpture; a Jupiter Aegiochus, found at Ephesus; a Cleopatra, and especially two great masks of *Faun and Faunesse*, of a singular expression.



## CHAPTER XI

### THE GRAND CANAL

---

**N**OW we are going, if you are not fatigued by that visit to the Palace of the Doges, to climb again into our gondola and make an excursion on the Grand Canal. The Grand Canal is to Venice what the Strand is to London, the Rue St. Honore to Paris, the Calle d'Alcala to Madrid, — the principal artery of circulation of the city. Its form is that of an S turned upside down, the hump of which indents the city on the side toward Saint Mark's and the upper tip of which extends to the Isle of Santa-Chiara, and the lower point to the Customhouse, near the Canal of *la Giudecca*. This S is cut in the middle by the bridge of the Rialto.

The Grand Canal of Venice is the most wonderful thing in the world. No other city affords a spectacle so fine, so bizarre, so fairy-like. As remarkable bits of architecture, perhaps, can be found elsewhere, but nowhere located under such picturesque conditions.

There each palace has a mirror in which to gaze at its beauty, like a coquettish woman. The superb reality is doubled by a charming reflection. The water lovingly caresses the feet of these beautiful façades, which a white light kisses on the forehead, and cradles them in a double sky. The small boats and big ships which are able to ascend it seem to be made fast for the express purpose of serving as set-offs or ground-plans for the convenience of the decorators and the painters.

In traversing the length of the Customhouse, which with the Palace of Giustiniani, which to-day is the Hotel de l'Europe, forms the entrance to the Grand Canal, cast a glance upon those horses' heads, stripped of their

flesh as though slaughtered, sculptured in the square and solid cornice which supports the Ball of Fortune: does this peculiar decoration signify that the horse is useless in Venice, or is this only a simple caprice of ornamentation?

The latter explanation seems to us the more probable, as we should not like to fall into the symbolical niceties which we have criticised in others. We have already described *la Salute*, which we behold from our window, and at which there is no necessity to halt after the picture of Canaletto, perhaps the greatest work of that painter. But here we find ourselves embarrassed. The Grand Canal is the veritable book of gold, where all the Venetian nobility have signed their names upon a monumental façade.

Each bit of wall narrates a story; every house is a palace; at each stroke of the oars the gondolier mentions a name which was as well known in the times of the Crusades as it is to-day; and this continues both to left and right for a distance of more than half a league. We have made a list of these palaces, not of all, but of the most remarkable, and we do not dare to transcribe it here on account of its length. It covers five or six pages: Pierre Lombard, Scamozzi, Sansovino, Sebastiano Mazzoni, Sammichelli, the great architect of Verona; Selva, Domenico Rossi, Visentini, have drawn the plans and directed the construction of these princely dwellings, without reckoning the unknown artists of the Middle Ages who built the most picturesque and most romantic of them, — those which give Venice its stamp and its originality.

On both banks, façades altogether charming and beautifully diversified succeed one another without interruption. After an architecture of the Renaissance with its columns comes a palace of the Middle Ages in Gothic Arab style, of which the Ducal Palace is the

prototype, with its balconies, lancet windows, trefoils, and acroteria. Further along is a façade adorned with marble plaques of various colors, garnished with medallions and consoles; then a great rose-colored wall in which is cut a large window with columnettes; all styles are found there—the Byzantine, the Saracen, the Lombard, the Gothic, the Roman, the Greek, and even the Rococo; the column and the columnette; the lancet and the semicircle; the fanciful capital, full of birds and of flowers, brought from Acre or from Jaffa; the Greek capital found in Athenian ruins; the mosaic and the bas-relief; the classic severity and elegant fantasy of the Renaissance. It is an immense gallery open to the sky, where one can study from the bottom of his gondola the art of seven or eight centuries. What treasures of genius, talent, and money have been expended on this space which may be traversed in less than a quarter of an hour! What tremendous artists, but also what intelligent and munificent patrons! What a pity that the patricians who knew how to achieve such beautiful things no longer exist save on the canvases of Titian, of Tintoretto, and du Moro!

Even before reaching the Rialto, you have, on the left, in ascending the Canal, the Palace Dario, in Gothic style; the Palace Venier, which presents itself by an angle, with its ornamentation, its precious marbles and medallions, in the Lombard style; the Fine Arts, a classic façade joined to the old *Ecole de la Charité* and surmounted by a Venice riding upon a lion; the Contarini Palace, in architectural style of Scamozzi; the Rezzonico Palace, with three superimposed orders; the triple Giustiniani Palace, in the style of the Middle Ages, in which resides M. Natale Schiavoni, a descendant of the celebrated painter Schiavoni, who possesses a gallery of pictures and a beautiful daughter, the living reproduction of a canvas painted by her ancestor; the Foscari

Palace, recognizable by its low door, by its two stories of columnettes supporting lancets and trefoils, where in other days were lodged the sovereigns who visited Venice, but now abandoned; the Balbi Palace, from the balcony of which the princes leaned to watch the regattas which took place upon the Grand Canal with so much pomp and splendor, in the palmy days of the Republic; the Pisani Palace, in the German style of the beginning of the fifteenth century; and the Tiepolo Palace, very smart and relatively modern; on the right, very close to the Hotel de l'Europe, there nestles between two big buildings, a delicious little palace which is composed of a window and a balcony; but such a window and balcony! A guipure of stone, of scrolls, of *guillochages*, and of open-work, which would seem possible of execution only with a punching machine upon one of those sheets of paper which cover baptismal sugar-plums, or are placed upon globes of lamps. We greatly regretted not having twenty-five thousand francs about us to buy it, since that was all that was demanded for it.

Further along, in ascending, the following palaces are found: *Corner della Cà Grande*, which dates from 1532, one of the best of Sansovino's; Grassi, to-day the Hotel de l'Empereur, the marble staircase of which is adorned with beautiful orange-trees in pots; *Corner Spinelli Grimani*, the robust and powerful architecture of Sammichelli, the basement of which is surrounded by a double fretwork of fine effect, and which is used to-day as the Post Office; Farsetti, with columned peristyle, and a long gallery of columnettes, taking up the whole façade, in which is domiciled the municipal government.

We might say, as Ruy-Gomez da Silva said to Charles V in the play of *Hernani*, when he is showing the portraits of his ancestors: "*J'en passe, et des meilleurs.*" Nevertheless, we will ask favor for the Loredan Pal-

ace and the ancient abode of Enrico Dandolo, the conqueror of Constantinople. Between these palaces there are some houses of equal worth, and whose chimney-tops, in the style of turbans, small towers, and vases of flowers, break very appropriately the great lines of architecture.

Sometimes a landing-place, or a *piazzetta*, like the *Campo San Vitale* for example, which faces the Academy, pleasantly interrupts this long succession of monuments.

This Campo, bordered by houses coated with a gay and lively red, makes a most happy contrast with the garlands of vine-branches on the trellis of a wine-shop; this dash of red, in the long row of façades more or less embrowned by time, rests and charms the eye. Some painter is always to be found established there, his palette on his thumb and his box on his knees. The gondoliers and pretty girls whom the presence of these fellows always attracts, pose naturally and become models after having been admirers.

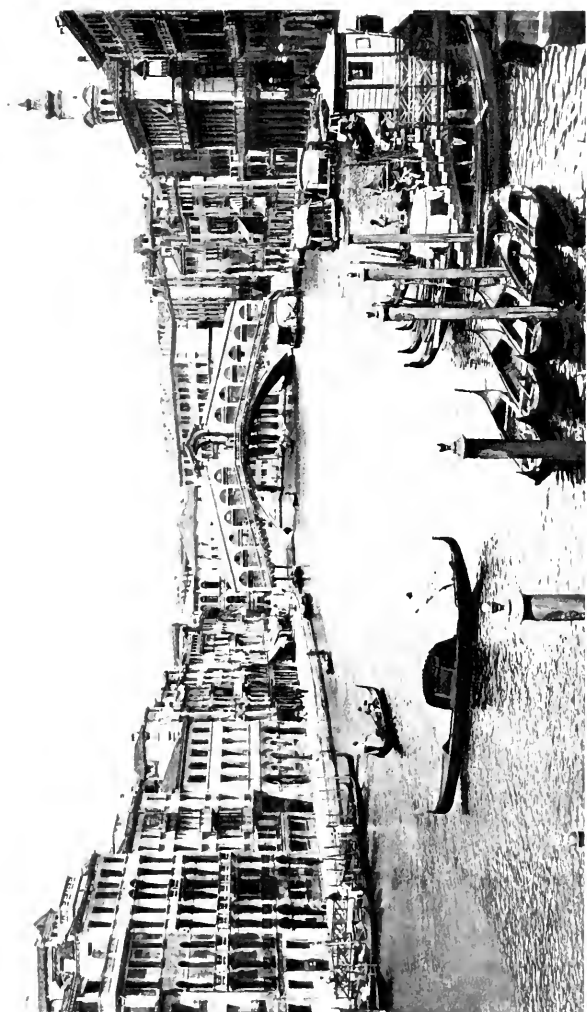
The Rialto, which is the most beautiful bridge in Venice, with a very grandiose and monumental air, bestrides the canal by a single span with a powerful and graceful curve. It was built in 1691, under the Dogeship of Pasquale Cigogna, by Antonio da Ponte, and replaced the ancient wooden drawbridge of which we have spoken in connection with the map of Albert Durer. Two rows of shops, separated in the middle by a portico in the form of an arcade and permitting a glimpse of the sky, burden the sides of the bridge, which can be crossed by three paths; that in the centre and the exterior passageways furnished with balustrades of marble.

Around the Bridge of the Rialto, one of the most picturesque spots of the Grand Canal, are gathered the oldest houses in Venice, with platformed roofs, on which



*THE GRAND CANAL, VENICE*  
*With the Rialto Bridge*







poles are planted to hang banners; their long chimneys, their bulging balconies, their stairways with disjointed steps, and their plaques of red rough-coating, the fallen flakes of which lay bare the brick walls and the foundations made green by contact with the water. There is always near the Rialto a tumult of boats and gondolas and of stagnant islets of tied-up craft drying their tawny sails, which are sometimes traversed by a large cross.

Shylock, that Jew so hungry for Christian flesh, had his shop on the Bridge of the Rialto, which has the high honor of having furnished a stage decoration for Shakespeare.

Below and beyond the Rialto are grouped on both banks the ancient *Fondaco dei Tedeschi*, upon the colored walls of which, in uncertain tints, may be divined some frescoes of Titian and Tintoretto, like dreams which come only to vanish; the fish-market, the vegetable market, and the old and new buildings of Scarpagnino and of Sansovino, almost fallen in ruins, in which are installed various courts.

These structures, reddish, dilapidated, frosted with admirable tones by old age and neglect, must be the delight of painters. Under their arcades, moreover, swarms a bustling and noisy populace who ascend and descend, go and come, sell and buy, laugh and cry; there fresh tunny-fish is sold in red slices, and oysters, crabs, and shrimps, are carried in basket measures. Under the arch of the bridge, where a particularly sonorous echo always resounds, the gondoliers, waiting for a job, sleep sheltered from the sun.

Still ascending, the Palace *Corner della Regina* is encountered on the left, so named on account of the Queen Cornaro, whom the Parisians know through Halévy's opera, the "Queen of Cyprus," in which Madame Stoltz had so beautiful a rôle. We do not remember whether

the scenery of Messieurs Sichan, Dieterle, and Desplechin was like the original: it might have been without loss of anything, for the architecture of Domenico Rossi is of a lofty elegance. The sumptuous Palace of Queen Cornaro is now a pawn-shop, and the humble rags of misery and the jewels of improvidence at bay come together under the rich wainscoting which prevents it from falling in ruins, for nowadays it is not sufficient to be beautiful, it is necessary also to be useful.

The College of the Armenians, which is at some distance from these, is an admirable edifice by Baldassare de Longhena, of a rich, solid and imposing architecture. It is the ancient Palace Pesaro.

On the right rises the Palace *della Cà d'Oro*, one of the most charming on the Grand Canal. It belongs to Mademoiselle Taglioni, who has restored it with most intelligent care. It is all embroidered, fringed, carved in a Greek, Gothic, barbaric style, so fantastic, so light, so aerial, that it might be fancied to have been built expressly for the nest of a sylph. Mlle. Taglioni has pity for these poor, abandoned palaces. She has several of them *en pension*, which she maintains out of pure commiseration for their beauty; we were told of three or four upon which she has bestowed this charity of repair.

Look at those mooring posts, strewn with golden fleur-de-lis; they tell you that the ancient palace Vendramin Calergi has become a quasi-royal habitation. It is the dwelling of Her Serene Highness, the Duchess de Berry, and she is certainly better housed than at the Pavilion Marsan; for this palace, the finest in Venice, is a masterpiece of architecture, and the sculptures are of a marvelous delicacy. There could be nothing prettier than the groups of children which support the shields on the arches of the windows. The interior is full of precious marbles; especially admirable are two

columns of porphyry of so rare a beauty that their value would pay for the palace.

Although we have been quite prolix, we have not said all. We notice that we have not mentioned the Mocenigo Palace, where the great Byron lived; our gondola has grazed the marble stairway where, with flying hair, her feet in the water, through the rain and tempest, the daughter of the people, mistress of a lord, greeted him upon his return with these tender words: "Great dog of the Madonna, is this the sort of weather to go to the Lido?" The Barbarigo Palace also deserves mention. We did not see the twenty-two Titians which it contains, and which the consul of Russia keeps under seal, having bought them for his master; but it contains other fine paintings, and the cradle all sculptured and gilded, destined for the heir of a noble family, a cradle of which a tomb could be made, for the Barbarigo are extinct like the majority of the ancient Venetian families. Of nine hundred patrician families inscribed in the book of gold, scarcely fifty remain to-day.

The ancient caravansary of the Turks, so populated in the days when Venice controlled all the commerce of the Orient and India, presents now two stories of Arab arcades fallen in or obstructed by the huts which have sprung up there like unwholesome mushrooms.

At about the point where the Canareggio branches off, some traces of the siege and bombardment by the Austrians are to be seen; some projectiles reached as far as the Labbia Palace, which was burned, and furrowed the unfinished façade of San Geremia. Of a ruined building, strange caprice of the bullets in their intelligent work of destruction, there remains apparently nothing more than a skull of marble sculptured at the summit of a wall, as if Death, in a sort of respectful dismay, had recoiled before its blasonry.

In going to a distance from the heart of the city, life

is extinct. Many windows are closed or barred with boards ; but this sadness has its beauty : it is more perceptible to the soul than to the eyes, regaled without cessation by the most unforeseen accidents of light and shade, by buildings so varied that even their dilapidation only renders them more picturesque, by the perpetual movement of the waters, and that blue and rose tint which composes the atmosphere of Venice.





## CHAPTER XII

### LIFE IN VENICE

---

**B**ACK of monumental Venice, a sort of decoration of a fairy opera, — which enchains the attention and by which the dazzled traveler is ordinarily arrested, — exists another more familiar, more intimate, and not less picturesque Venice, although little known: it is that of which we are about to speak.

Before we had been long in Venice, we left the Hotel de l'Europe, which occupies the ancient Palace of Gustiniani, at the entrance to the Grand Canal, in order to install ourselves at the corner of the Campo San Mose, at the house of Signor Tramontini, in a lodging left vacant by a Russian prince. Let not these words, *Russian prince*, awaken ideas of magnificence unbecoming for a poor poet like ourselves; at Venice one can enjoy the luxury of a palace for a moderate price. A marvel of a palace, bearing the stamp of Sansovino or Scamozzi, may be rented for less than the cost of a garret in the Rue de la Paix, and our apartments were part of a simple house, rough-coated in rose color, like most of the houses in Venice. This lodging offered the prince the advantage of looking out, through the windows on the side facing the Place, upon the shop of a French baker, who, however little gold or silver he possessed, had at least a daughter of striking beauty. The quantities of light bread and of unleavened bread bought by the Russian prince in the interests of passion would have sufficed to feed a number of families; but it accomplished nothing. The young bakeress was guarded by maternal vigilance with greater care than the apples of gold in the garden of the Hesperides by the mythological dragon, and the

disappointed Muscovite was compelled to go to extinguish the fire of his ardor in his natal snowbanks. This beautiful girl remained for us in a state of mystery, for we did not see her once during a sojourn in the house of several weeks. Every tenant of this lodging was by the simple fact of his tenancy suspected of libertinism.

It is by no means a desire to exploit the nook in which we passed so happy a month that impels us to stop here for some details. We are not among those whose joy or sadness is a matter of importance to the world at large, and if we sometimes make use of our own personality in these notes of travel, it is only as a means of transition and to escape the embarrassment of forms: and then it is not without interest to mingle the real Venice with the Venice of our dreams.

In the midst of our search for an apartment, we were accosted by a Brescian adventurer, a young man of pleasant countenance who called himself a student and a painter, and profited by our ignorance of localities and of the Venetian dialect to the extent of making himself necessary to us and slipping into an intimacy with us; since some pieces of gold which jingled in our pockets make us seem grand signors to his eyes as compared with his personal poverty. He conducted us to a number of dirty lodgings, each one more horrible than the other, and in comparison with which the little room of Consuelo, in the Corte-Minelli, would have been a paradise. He was astonished to find us so difficult to please, and conceived still more magnificent ideas as to our station. In order to gain our good will and to assure himself of patrons of such importance, he made us a present of one of those frail bouquets, mounted on a staff and surrounded by a card, which are distributed in Venice for a small piece of copper. He seemed to base great hopes upon the ingenious delicacy of this treat, hopes which were deceptive, and to the failure of which he resigned himself

with great difficulty. Ices and coffee did not seem to him at all a sufficient compensation for his bouquet, and he complained with such bitterness of the considerable expense to which the generosity of his too loyal heart had subjected him in the company of noble foreigners that we felt obliged to offer him a half-dozen "Zwanzigs," which he grumblingly accepted with all the signs of wounded pride at receiving so little. Our lodging had a water-gate and a land-gate opening upon a canal and on a Place, like most of the houses in Venice. It was composed of a very decent bed-chamber and a quite large sitting-room, separated by an entrance chamber which opened on to a balcony with three windows which we garnished with flowers and where we passed the greater part of our time dreaming and looking out, smoking cigarettes; this arrangement of rooms is found almost everywhere, in the palaces as well as in more humble habitations. The balcony is the central point of the edifice. These balconies occupy a middle place between the Spanish *mirador* and the Arabian *moucharaby*. A sofa, chairs of horse-hair, a bed enveloped by a mosquito net, a table, and a dressing-table completed the furniture. The inlaid flooring was replaced by a species of diapered stucco of different colors, resembling an immense slice of "galantine" (boned turkey with truffles). Nothing was wanting, not even the truffles simulated by the black pebbles. This *charcuterie* paves all the apartments of Venice. It is cooling to the feet and moreover is easy to keep clean. The walls, following the usage in Italy, were colored in a neutral tint and adorned with gay lithographs, illuminated in the style of Compté-Calix, which was, to a certain extent, flattering to French art, but regulated from the point of view of local color; fortunately a Panagia, painted by the New Byzantines of Mount Athos, with a rigidity and hierarchical barbarity worthy of the ninth

century, relieved the modern vulgarity of these images of adventure.

This Madonna with gilded monogram came from our hostess, an amiable Greek woman married at Venice, who lived in the apartment above ours. A sonnet printed on satin and appropriately framed, told, with strong allusions drawn from mythology, how the Ionian waves had yielded their Venus to the Adriatic waves, and how a virtuous Helen had followed beyond the sea an honest Paris. Helen was, in fact, the name of the young woman, but the resemblance did not extend to her husband, who was called *Joseph Tramontine*.

The Signora Elena had passed through four churchings, and still preserved the pallidness of hands and of countenance which is the recompense of young mothers. Married at a proper age, she had already had several *avocats*. Let not this expression arouse any suspicions as to the modesty of this charming woman. Although the Venetians are fairly long-lived people, the children are badly reared and many of them die in their early years. These little innocents go straight to Heaven and plead the cause of their parents before the tribunal of God. Hence the name *avocats*. Moreover, on account of this belief, the parents are easily consoled for their loss.

The remainder of the household consisted of a young nurse, who came from the Frioulian Alps, a peasant girl with hollow cheeks, a big, astonished and savage eye, who bounded from step to step on the staircase, with her baby in her arms, like a frightened goat leaping from rock to rock; and an old servant called Lucia, a poetic name, little in accord with her hair bristling like asparagus stalks, her rank and yellow skin, squinting eyes, thick-lipped mouth, and shrill voice.

As we have said already, our lodging furnished a view of the Place and of the Canal. Why should not a de-

scription of this double view have the same interest as a water-color of Joyant, or William Wyld, who have made a multitude of little familiar sketches of narrow lanes, of nooks, of canals, of landing-places picturesquely encumbered? Is the pen less skilful than the pencil? Let us try.

At the bottom of the Place, or, as it is called, *the Campo*, rises the Church of San Mose, with its façades of flamboyant rococo, almost sullen in its violent exaggeration. It is not that heavy, flabby rococo, oldish and worn out, to which we are accustomed in France, but a robust bad style, full of force, of exuberance, of invention, and of caprice; the volutes are distorted like flourishes of stone, the corbels make sudden leaps, the architraves are interrupted by deep notches, the sculptured allegories lean on the arch of the tympan in impossible and Michael Angelo-like attitudes. Statues with swelling costumes and waving draperies assume, in their niches, the attitude of the captain or the dancing-master. The bust of the founder, at the end of the pyramidion which supports him, has the air, so moustached and formidable is he, of the portrait of Don Spavento. Oh well! these endives tufted like cabbages, these columns with bracelets, cartouches like napkins, these uncouth figures, this overloading of extravagant ornamentation, produce a rich effect, grandiose in spite of good taste having been violated in every detail, but violated by a vigorous imagination. Vignole would blame the design of this fantastic doorway. We absolve him fully. The weird architect is called *Alexander Tremignon*.

This truculent façade is connected by a flying bridge with its steeple, a diminutive copy of the Campanile of the Place of Saint Mark. In Italy, the architects have always been embarrassed by bells; they do not know how or are unwilling to attach them to the edifice.

One might say that, prejudiced in spite of themselves in favor of pagan temples, they regard the Catholic bell-turrets as a deformed superfluity, as a barbaric excrecence; they make of them only an isolated tower, a sort of belfry, and seem to be ignorant of the magnificent effects which the religious architecture of the North has drawn from them. Let this be said in passing. We shall have to return to this matter more than once.

The entrance to San Mose is covered with a thick leather portière, which, on being raised, affords a vague glimpse, in a transparent shadow, of splendors of gilding, and the glimmer of candles, and from which come forth tepid whiffs of incense, mingled with sounds of organ and of prayers.

The turret bell has no sinecure, — it rings all day long. In the morning it is the Angelus, then the Mass, the Vespers, then the evening Salute. Its tongues of iron are scarcely still a few moments at a time. Nothing tires its lungs of bronze. Close at hand, separated by a lane as narrow as the most strangulated *Callejon* of Grenada or of Constantinople, and which leads to the landing-place of the Grand Canal, the presbytery shelters itself in the shadow of the church. A sombre façade, veneered with a faded red, pierced by gloomy windows with complicated gratings, and which would be a blot on this clear Venetian picture, were it not that masses of plants enlivened it a little with their tender green, and that a charming Madonna, surmounting a box for the poor, smiles between two lamps.

The three or four houses which face it number among them the house of the baker besieged by the Russian prince; that of a flower-seller, whose front, garnished with small pots, exposes for sale tulips in bulbs or in full bloom, and rare plants, scaffolded with sticks and flanked by scientific labels; a shop of various commodities forming the corner of the side of the Canal, the whole coated

with lime, variegated by green window shutters, streaked with balconies, and surmounted by chimneys with capitals widened into turbans, which change the roofs of Venice into Turkish cemeteries.

At one of these balconies appeared quite often a pretty signora (in so far as the distance would permit her to be distinguished), almost always clad in black, and playing with a fan with a dexterity wholly Spanish. It seemed to us that we had already seen her somewhere. In thinking of her, we found that it was in the Memoirs of Charles Gozzi.

She recalled the type of the young girl by the window, of his romance. Perhaps it might not have been impossible to enter upon an *amour en gondole*, with serenades, treats, and bonbons, according to the ancient Venetian fashion. But the traveler is a bird of passage, who has no time for love. On the open face of the Place, by the side of the landing-place, there is a bridge of white marble of a single arch, which bestrides the Canal, and puts the Campo in communication with the lane on the opposite bank leading to the Place of Saint Maurice.

At one end, the Canal sinks down in one of those perspectives which the views of Venice have presented to all the world; lofty houses, rose colored at the top, green at the bottom, with head in the sun, and foot in the water; lancet windows jostling the square, modern bay; chimneys rounded off with flower-pots; long striped awnings hanging from the balconies; tiles of vermilion or bistre; pinnacles crowned with statues, detaching themselves in white upon the azure of the sky; mooring posts illumined with vivid colors; waters shimmering in the shade; boats, stationary or grazing with their black sides the marble of the stairways with unexpected effects of light or shade.

This water-color, large as nature, was hung up in front of our window on the side toward the water. At

the other end the Canal, again barred by a bridge, emptied itself into the *Canalazzo* and allowed a glimpse of a portion of the entrance wall of the Customhouse and the bronze Fortune turning toward the wind on her golden ball as well as the concourse of craft too big to be able to penetrate into the narrow streets of water.

Facing us the Hotel of the Golden Star is seen, which has nothing remarkable about it except a terrace festooned with vines, and of which we could not speak without mentioning a characteristic of its sign-board, originally written in three languages — Italian, French and German. The Teutonic lettering, doubtless effaced during the siege of Venice, may be deciphered vaguely under the paint and has not been restored through patriotic motives. This united protest against the foreign yoke is met with everywhere.

Seated on our balcony and exhaling the light fumes of the tobacco of the Levant, we are going to outline a sketch of Venetian life. It is still morning; the cannon of the frigate which opens the port sends forth its white smoke upon the lagune; the Angelic salutation vibrates from the thousand bell-turrets of the city. Patrician and bourgeois Venetians are still fast asleep; but the poor devils who make their beds on the steps of the stairways, on the palace steps or the bases of the columns, have already quitted their couches and shaken their tatters damp with the dew. The gondoliers of the landing wash the sides of their gondolas, brush the cloth of the *felce*, polish the iron of their prows, shake out the Persian rug which adorns the bottom of the boats, puff out the cushions of black leather and put everything in order aboard their craft to be ready for the call to business.

The heavy barges which bring provisions to the city are beginning to arrive from Mestre, from Fusine, from Zuecca, a kind of maritime suburb, bordered by buildings



on one side and by gardens on the other; from Chioggia, from Torcello, and from other places on the mainland or from the islands.

These barges, laden with green vegetables, grapes, and peaches, leave behind them a pleasant odor of vegetation which contrasts with the acrid smell of the vessels loaded with mackerel, mullet, oysters, crabs, shell-fish, and other "sea fruits," to use the picturesque Venetian term.

Others carrying wood and charcoal stop at the water-gates in order to discharge their merchandise and pursue their peaceful course. The wine arrives not in casks as with us, not in leathern bottles of buckskin as in Spain, but in great open vats which it colors with its purple more sombre than the juice of the mulberry. The epithet black, which Homer never failed to apply to wine, may be fittingly applied to these products of the vineyards of Friulia and Istria.

The water to fill the cisterns is brought in the same manner; for Venice, in spite of its aquatic situation, might die of thirst like Tantalus, not possessing a single spring. In other days this water was sought at Fusine on the Canal *de la Brenta*. Now the artesian wells, sunk fortunately by M. Degousée, supply the majority of the cisterns. There is scarcely a Campo which does not possess one. The mouth of these reservoirs, surrounded with a curb like that of a well, has furnished the most delightful *motifs* to the fantasy of the Venetian architects and sculptors: sometimes they make a Corinthian capital of it, hollowed out in the middle; sometimes the jaws of a monster; at other times they roll around this drum of bronze, of marble, or of stone, bacchanals of children, garlands of flowers or of fruit unhappily too frequently worn out by the friction of the ropes and of the buckets of copper. These cisterns, filled with gravel by which the water is kept fresh, give

a peculiar character to the localities ; they open at certain hours and the women come to draw there, like the Greek slaves at the ancient fountains.

Behold ! here is a gondola which hooks on to another. One might call them, on seeing them bite with their iron axe, two spiteful swans plucking each other's feathers with their beaks. One of the gondoliers did not hear or heard too late the cry of warning, a sort of wail in an unknown jargon.

The dispute begins and the two champions bawl at each other like Homeric heroes before the battle. Standing upright on the poop they brandished their oars. One might believe they were about to kill each other. Do not fear, there is more noise than malice. The oaths " Body of Bacchus ! " " Blood of Diana ! " are hurled from one side to the other, but presently mythological oaths do not suffice. The curses and blasphemies grow, always increasing in intensity. " Lame crab," " sea lion," " dog," " son of a cow," " ass," " son of a sow," " assassin," " ruffian," " spy," — such are the amiable epithets that they lavish upon one another. Associating Heaven with their quarrel, they curse their respective saints. " The Madonna of thy landing is a street-walker who is not worth two candles." " Thy Saint is a rascal who does not know how to make a decent miracle," responds the other. We have softened the expressions.

It is to be remarked that the vociferations become more outrageous as the distance between the boats is lengthened, and the participants in this furious dialogue realize themselves to be out of reach of each other. Presently, only hoarse croakings are heard, which lose themselves in the distance.

Here passes an official gondola with the Austrian banner at the stern, taking to some inspection a cold and stiff functionary, his breast bedizened with decorations ; this other one carries some English people, phlegmatic

tourists; that one there, slender as a skate, veers off, mysterious and discreet, more towards the open. Its lowered *felce*, its raised blinds, hide two lovers who are going to breakfast at the Point of Quintavalle; that one, heavier and larger, is carrying off, under its white-and-blue-striped awning, an honest family going to take the sea baths at the Lido, on that shore whose fine sand still preserves the footprints of the horses of Lord Byron.

But the Church is opening. Out of it comes forth a red cortege, bearing a red bier which is deposited in a red gondola. Here mourning is indicated by crimson. It is a corpse which is starting for the cemetery, situated on an island on the way to Murano. The priests, the bearers, the candlesticks, and the ornaments of the Church occupy the boat which precedes. Go to sleep, poor corpse, under the sand impregnated with the sea salt, in the shade of an iron cross which the wing of the gull will skim over! For the bones of a Venetian, the earth of the mainland would be too heavy a covering.

While we are on this funereal subject, let us say that in Venice, when any one dies, there is stuck up on his house and on those in the neighboring streets, a printed notice which gives his name, age, place of birth, the malady to which he succumbed, affirms that he has received the sacraments, that he died a good Christian, and asks for him the prayers of the faithful.

Let us leave these melancholy subjects here. The wake of the red bark is closed over: let us think no more about it. Let us forget as do the waves, which preserve no trace of anything; it is of life and not of death that we must dream.



## CHAPTER XIII

### FAMILIAR DETAILS

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ON the bridge come and go young girls, operatives, nursemaids or servants in chemisette and petticoat under their long shawls ; on their necks are rolled up, like cables, long twists of that reddish blonde hair so dear to the Venetian painter. I salute from my window these models of Paul Veronese, who pass by without imagining that they posed three or four hundred years ago for the Marriage of Cana : old women cowed in the national *baùte*, hastening to arrive in time for mass, the last stroke of which is tolling at San Mose ; Hungarian soldiers, with blue trousers, with black half-boots, with a cloak of gray ticking, making the bridge resound under their heavy and regular tread, carrying to some barracks the wood with which to cook the soup or victuals of the mess ; some *illustrissimi*, old ruined nobles, having still a grand air under their clean but threadbare garments, betaking themselves to Florian's, the place of reunion for the aristocracy, that excellent café for which Constantinople transmitted the recipe to Venice, and nowhere is better drink to be had.

However, perhaps these apparitions of past time may excite a smile ; but the populace of Venice loves its old *noblesse*, who have always been good to and familiar with it.

Nothing is done in the ordinary way in this fantastic city. The musical instruments of the streets, instead of traveling on the hips of the turner of the handle, are dragged about by water. The organ goes in a gondola : one passed just now under our balcony. It was one of those great pieces of mechanism manufactured at Cre-

mona, the native place of the good violin. The play of trumpets, of triangles, and of tambourines makes a complete orchestra of it, to the sound of which dance a ballet of mechanical marionettes enclosed in a case. More than one boat turns out of its road to enjoy the melody longer, and the musical gondola goes forward followed by a small dilettante flotilla which traverses the canals after it.

What is this boat which now passes by, having fastened to its sides a kind of bluish monster which paddles, splashes, and makes the water fly in foam? These are fishermen who display a dolphin, a marine curiosity captured in their nets, and who hold out their hats to the windows and to the gondolas in order to collect some pieces of silver.

With strong ropes, cleverly knotted, they keep the animal half in its element, half in the air, in order that it may be seen. It scarcely resembles those fantastic monsters to whom heraldry gives the name of dolphin, a chimera which holds a middle place between a fish and an ornament. We did not find in that big bulging head terminating in a beak, the heraldic fosses and the scalloped pinking of armorial bearings. Arion, with his lyre, would not cut a very fine figure astride a monster of this sort.

Now let us look at the side toward the Place. The tableau is no less animated. The shop of the *friturier*, whose cabin of boards and canvas is established at the base of the bridge, is open; the stoves are in full activity and in the air the odor of the smoke is mingled with the somewhat acrid smell of boiling oil. Frying holds a prominent place in Italian life. Sobriety is a southern virtue which early becomes mixed up with laziness, and causes little cooking to be done in the houses. Some send to these kitchens in the open air for pastry, fritters, and fried fish, while others, less fastidious, consume them on the spot!

The *friturier*, if we may be pardoned for introducing a neologism necessary in a journey through Italy, is a great, big, fat-cheeked, big-bellied fellow, a sort of obese Hercules, of the type of Palforio, with scarlet cheeks, parrot nose, ears adorned with rings, shining black hair curled in little ringlets, like the wool of an Astrachan lamb. He is seated like a king on his throne, having behind him three or four rows of shining copper dishes, like the ancient shields hanging from the sides of the triremes.

The vendor of pumpkins, viands of which the Venetians are epicures, also offers for sale his commodity, which looks like cakes of yellow wax, and which he sells in slices. A young girl at a window makes a sign to the seller and lets down, at the end of a cord, a basket in which she hauls up a piece proportioned in size to the amount of money she has sent down. This convenient method of supplying oneself with provisions is well suited to the Venetian easy-going mode of life.

A group is formed in the middle of the Campo, a group presently augmented by all the passers by and the idlers discharged by the bridge, and they betake themselves, by way of the lane running past the church, to the *Frezzaria* or the Place of Saint Mark, the two localities most frequented in Venice.

A circle left open in the centre of the crowd permits us to see a poor devil, very dilapidated, wearing a melancholy hat, a pitiful coat, and ragged trousers; he has at his side an old woman, a wretched companion, half witch and half Fate, in a costume equally miserable with that of the man. A covered basket is placed on the ground in front of them. A dog, unkempt, dirty, emaciated, but having the air of intelligence of an animal well versed in all sorts of exercises, watches the old couple with that human eye which the dog assumes in the presence of his master; he seems to await a sign, a command. Is this a performance of wise dogs which we are about to witness?

Yet there is no music, and the poor beast is not dressed like a marquis. The old man makes a gesture of command. The attentive dog precipitates himself upon the basket, one of the covers of which he lifts with his teeth; he waits a few seconds, then, pushing the other lid with his nose, he springs back triumphant, holding in his mouth a little piece of folded paper which he lays at the feet of the old woman; he repeats this performance several times, and the bystanders snatch away the billets drawn from the basket.

The dog is drawing the numbers for a lottery. Those which he pulls out under certain conditions ought infallibly to win; the players of both sexes, who are very numerous in Venice, as in all unfortunate countries, where the hope of a sudden fortune acquired without work acts forcibly upon the imagination, have great confidence in the numbers thus fished out by the dog.

Seeing the profound misery and famished countenances of this couple, the shrunken anatomy of the dog whose numbers ought to win so many gold pieces, we asked why these poor devils did not avail themselves to greater advantage of the means of making a fortune which they were distributing so generously to others for a few sous.

This simple reflection had occurred to no one. Perhaps the diviners of the numbers are like the sorcerers who cannot foresee the future for themselves; clairvoyant as to others, they become blind when they themselves are concerned; otherwise, this unhappy couple should have been millionaires at least.

Venice is full of lottery offices. The winning numbers, written on cards framed in flowers and ribbons, in fantastic figures of azure, of red, and of gold, excite the curiosity of the passing throng. In the evening they are brilliantly illuminated by lamps and candles; the favorite numbers, the number which infallibly ought to come forth,

according to the calculations of probability dear to the patrons of the lottery, as strong in this matter as M. Poisson of the Institute, are also exposed with great display. Certain players who are determined to follow these imaginary martingales, buy them at any price and recommence, in spite of numerous failures, their stakes doubled or tripled according to mathematical progression.

In France, the lottery has been suppressed as immoral. Perhaps it is more humane not to deprive the unfortunate of hope; why give the poor devils the certainty of their never possessing a sou? This chimera of the great stake, this paradise of the four and five winning numbers has given patience to many despairing souls.

Our gondola is to come at three o'clock. Antonio knocks at the water-gate. We have dismissed the gondoliers of the Hotel de l'Europe and hired a gondola by the month, as this plan is less expensive and more convenient. Antonio is a young wag of fifteen or sixteen, very alert, very sure-footed, handling his oar well, making a very good appearance on the poop of the boat, with his shaggy cap and his calico jacket of Persian pattern. He has only one fault: he is too much taken up with the ankles of the pretty women getting in and out of the gondolas. The other day a little slipper of gold encasing a stocking of embroidered silk, which descended three steps of rose-colored marble, nearly caused us to be capsized by our inflammable gondolier. Aside from this he was very well behaved. Cupid saved him from Bacchus, as the classical scholar would say.

There stands at the end of the bank of the Canal of the Slaves, beyond the Public Gardens, on the Point of Quintavalle, on the island of Saint Peter, the house of an old fisherman named Ser-Zuane, celebrated for its fish dinners, like the Trafalgar Hotel in London or the Ship Tavern at Greenwich, near London, or like la Râpée in Paris.



We made up a party to go there to dinner, and making the gondola hold a little to the offing, we lazily enjoyed that spectacle of which the eye can never grow weary, if it were to see it forever, so admirable, so fairy-like, and so ever new is it.

We see file before us as in a panoramic band between the sky and the water, the *Zecca*, the old Library of Sansovino, the columns of the *Piazzetta*, the Ducal Palace, the Bridge of Sighs, the Hotel Danieli, the Quay of the Slaves, all bordered by shops and craft, the effect of which is most picturesque; then the *fondamenta Cà di Dio* prolongs the line of the quay and the Public Gardens, whose verdure and freshness give the lie to the idea that there is nothing in Venice but water, marble, and brick.

Having passed by the Gardens, we approached, by the Canal of San Pietro de Castello, the abode of Ser-Zuane: some boats drawn up on the sand, some nets stretched out in the sun, a few planks forming a rustic landing-place in front of the house,—very simple indeed, and one which might furnish a piquant *motif* for a maritime sketch to Eugene Isabey.

The finest room in the house had been prepared for us, but we had our table transported to the bottom of the garden under an arbor shaded by vine branches and fig-leaves, and from which hung some gourds which had been made to climb up it. The garden, obstructed by kitchen-garden plants, flowers, and weeds, was sufficiently ill-kept to be charming. This free and luxuriant vegetation was more pleasing to us than a too ornate cultivation.

Ser-Zuane, although a little put out by the fancy, always incomprehensible to the common people, of preferring a wooden bench, a table on trestles under a mass of verdure, to a horse-hair chair and mahogany table in a room with mirrors and pictures from Saint James Street, did not display toward us any less of his jovial cordiality.

The wife of Ser-Zuane, who seemed to enjoy a despotic authority at the house, is a big, jolly, gossiping woman, with high color. We do not know whether this Philemon and this Baucis have lived happily together, but they have a lot of children, like the princes and princesses of the fairy tales. Zuane claims that he is still lusty enough to add to this numerous line, but his wife says that is simple nonsense.

Each country has its local dainties, its peculiar dish. Marseilles boasts of its *bouille-a-baisse*, its *aioli* and its *clorisses*; Venice has its *soupe aux pidocchi*, which is better than its somewhat unsavory name. The *pidocchi* (sea lice) are a species of mussels which are gathered in the lagunes and even in the canals. The best are those of the Arsenal.

The soup *aux pidocchi* is a classic dish at Ser-Zuane's, and all travelers fond of the local coloring owe it to their conscience to partake of it, served by the hand of the old fisherman of the Adriatic. We aver, with our hand on our stomach, that we prefer the *potage à la bisque* and turtle soup; but nevertheless, the mussel soup, flavored properly with spices and aromatic herbs, has its charm, especially under an arbor at Quintavelle. The remainder of the dinner was made up of oysters from the Arsenal, with fine herbs, sea-snails of a rosy white, soles, and mullets from Chioggia, and of fried sardines, the whole washed down with wine of the valley of Policella and of Piccolit of Conegliano, with a dessert of those beautiful and golden fruits which ripen in the sun on the hills of Esta, of Monselice, and of Montagnana. At dessert, while we were drinking a bottle of the wine of Samos, ripe and mellow as a Homeric wine, the old woman came to talk to us gaily and familiarly, after the fashion of an ancient hostess; she offered a huge bouquet hastily gathered in her garden, and tied with a bit of rush, to the wife of the friend who was sharing our re-

past, a charming woman with a Spanish face, whose round white arm issued from her black lace sleeve. The old woman exclaimed at the whiteness and beauty of this arm, which she kissed several times with that familiar grace of the lower classes of Venice, whose respectful courtesy contains nothing servile.

The bill was brought to us made out on the bottom of a plate. The charge was quite high, but we had enjoyed a delicate and curious dinner, and, in the quality of a foreigner, and considering the expense of translation, it was nothing to speak of; we did not make the slightest remark, and the fisherman accompanied us to the landing where our gondolas awaited us.

We proceeded to make a tour of the Public Gardens near at hand; there is a grand promenade planted with trees outlining an obtuse angle upon the sea, and terminated at its point by a hillock, surmounted by a café frequented by drinkers and wandering musicians. The children and young girls amuse themselves by rolling down the easy slope carpeted with soft grass.

The view extends far out on the lagoon. Murano can be seen from there, the island where glass is made; San Servolo, where the insane asylum is located, and the low line of the Lido, with its sand-dunes, its public houses, and its pollarded trees; rows of posts, indicating the depth of the water, form a kind of alleys in the shallow water, in which float planks, wreckage, and sea débris. The perspective is enlivened by a perpetual coming and going of sails and craft of all kinds.

The Public Gardens, on feast days, exhibit the most charming collection of Venetian beauties. It is there that one may study at his ease that type described by Gozzi, blonde, "fair and portly."

The presence of the Austrians has necessarily modified the Venetian type, although marriages between them are rare, on account of the natural antipathy of the two

racés ; but one still finds in real life the models of Jean Bellin, of Giorgione, of Titian, and of Veronese.

The young girls walk in groups of two or three, most of them bareheaded, and with their plentiful blonde or auburn hair dressed in good taste. The brown southern type is quite rare in Venice among the women, although frequently met with in the men. We had already remarked that peculiarity in Spain, at Valencia, where the male population has the black hair, the olive complexion, the wan and burnt appearance of a tribe of Bedouins of Africa, while the women are as blonde, white, and fresh-colored as the farmers' daughters of Lancashire. Moreover, this distribution of shades is very happy. Adam was of the color of brick. Eve, the color of milk—and it furnishes painters with happy contrasts.

We saw there many charming heads, the very distinct memory of which it would be extremely difficult for us to reproduce without a brush.

We will try to sketch some general features. The lines of the face, without coming up to the Greek regularity, a regularity almost architectural, nevertheless have a rhythm which is wanting in the countenances of the North, more harrassed by thought and the multitudinous uncertainties of civilization. The noses are more pure, more free from bone than the northern nose, always full of the unexpected and of caprice. The eyes have also that shining placidity unknown among us, and which recalls the clear and tranquil look of the animal : they are very often black, in spite of the blonde tint of the hair ; the mouth has that *smorfia*, a species of disdainful smile, full of provocation and of charm, which gives so much character to the heads of the Italian masters.

That which is especially charming in the Venetians is the nape of the neck, the end of the neck, and the beginning of the shoulders. It would be impossible to

imagine anything more *svelte*, more elegant, more delicate, and more round. There is something both of the swan and the dove in the necks which undulate, bend, and bridle; on the napes are twisted all sorts of little natural curls, little rebellious locks, escaped from the bite of the comb, with plays of light, sparkling of the sun, splendors of shade that would delight a colorist. After a tour of the Public Gardens one is no longer astonished at the gilded splendors of the Venetian school; that which one had believed to be a dream of art is only a translation, sometimes a poor one, of reality.

We have often followed some of these napes without even trying to see the head which they carried, intoxicating ourselves with these lines so pure and this warm whiteness. Once even we made, through the labyrinth of the lanes of Venice, a most curious promenade in the wake of a pretty neck which did not understand it at all and took us for a conceited and imbecile flirt. She was a tall girl, extraordinarily brown, resembling very much Mlle. Rachel in the long and delicate elegance of her figure and the antique build of her neck. She had such a perfect dignity of movement that her large red shawl of barege appeared upon her like the purple cloak of a queen. Never had the great tragedienne made her pepulum or tunic assume more beautiful or more noble folds.

She walked quickly, making the folds of her blue gown skim around her like the billows at the feet of Thetis, with an ease and a spirited gait of which a great coquette might well be jealous. We afterward lost sight of her in the crowd of promenaders, but the red twinkle of her shawl guided us like the light of a beacon, and we always found her again.

This pursuit began on the Place Saint Mark. Near the Bridge of the Paille, the beautiful girl stopped and talked a few moments with a swarthy old man, with gray hair and beard, a gondolier or fisherman, who appeared

to be her father. The old man gave her some money, then she plunged into one of those little lanes which debouch on the Quay of the Slaves.

After many detours in this labyrinth of lanes, of *sotto portici*, of canals, of bridges which so often mislead the stranger in Venice, she came to a halt, doubtless to rid herself of the shadow which followed her at a distance, before one of those fish-stands in the open air, where Spanish mackerel is sold in red slices. She bargained for a long time for a piece which she did not buy. She again resumed her walk, imperceptibly turning her head over her shoulders and rolling her eye to our corner in order to see whether she was rid of her follower. When she perceived that the contrary was the fact, she made a gesture of ill-humor which made her still more charming, and continued her route by streets, lanes, places, passages, bridges with stairways, in a way to completely throw us off our bearings.

She led us even, with her agile step and always with increasing speed, from the side of the Arsenal into a deserted quarter as far as a place where the façade of an unfinished church rises, and there threw herself like a scared doe against a door which opened and closed immediately.

Among all the guesses this poor child could have made, — gallantry, seduction, abduction, — she certainly could not have imagined that she was being followed by a poet who was feasting his eyes, and seeking to engrave in his memory as a beautiful strophe or a fine picture, that charming nape which he was never to behold again.



## CHAPTER XIV

### THE DÉBUT OF THE VICAR—GONDOLAS—SUNSET

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**I**N issuing from the Public Gardens, one finds oneself upon an ancient canal filled in and transformed into a street. This street presented a most animated appearance: in front of the windows and all the balconies hung pieces of damask, breadths of brocatelle, Persian carpets, or carpets made of bits of color in the fashion of a harlequin's coat, as they are manufactured at Venice; tablecloths of guipure, pieces of flaming silk, and on the poorer houses, curtains or bed-clothes; there was not a single house unadorned.

We could have believed ourselves in France on the feast of Corpus Christi at the time when the procession is about to come forth, if the strangeness of the costumes and of the types had not informed us to the contrary. The windows framed groups of three or four young girls or young women in white or blue gowns, with shawls of lively color, an animated and joyous air, leaning out toward the street or turning around to reply to men standing behind them.

The street was encumbered with stalls of *frituriers* vendors of pumpkins, watermelons, and grapes. The *acquaïoli* threw into the water a few drops of kirsch which gave it the coolness of ice and the tint of the opal. The improvised coffee sellers sold their brown liquor; others sold ices, highly colored.

The wine shops were crowded with drinkers, celebrating with the black wine of Italy and the yellow wine of Greece. An astonishing crowd swarmed in gay tumult in this narrow space.

The church in front of which we were passing permitted us to see through its open doors a conflagration of tapers. The principal altar was dazzling, and in that warm, red atmosphere thousands of lights scintillated like stars. The church was hung with damask strewn with gold, festooned with paper garlands, and the attendance was so great that it would have been impossible to take three steps beyond the threshold.

A hurricane of music, bass-voils, flutes, and violins burst forth, under its illuminated arch, then the voices took up the chant. A musical service is no rarity in Venice; but this was listened to with an attentive curiosity which is not customary in Italian worship, which is slightly sensuous and heedless.

A priest of the parish was making his *début* as curé or vicar, we know not which, and that was the motive for this festival. Some sonnets and odes in praise of his evangelical virtues and of his Christian charity were placarded on the walls; in Italy, everything is made the occasion for a sonnet. An opportunity for it is found in marriages, births, anniversaries, recoveries from illness, death. The cantatrices are overwhelmed with them; the sonnet is in Italy what the eulogy is with us, an innocent and poetic eulogy, entirely disinterested, a naïve outpouring of that infantine admiration which the southern peoples, more passionate than those of the North, feel the need of giving vent to apropos of everything. In these sonnets there is a tremendous consumption of metaphors and conceits; in them the stars are unfastened and taken down every minute, the planets dance sarabands, and omelettes are made of the sun and moon. The Adonis of the Cavalier Marin is not so forgotten as we might think.

In passing along the *fondamenta Cà di Dio* in order to return to the *Piazzetta*, we saw some young people of the city, lovers of aquatic prowess like our Parisian



bargemen, who were hurling, with all the strength of their oars, their gondolas against the wall of the quay, and when only a few inches from the stone wall, with a powerful stroke and quick thrust of the oar, stopped the boat short. This play is terrifying and at the same time pleasant to witness; one might suppose when it is seen coming on so rapidly that the craft was about to be dashed into a thousand pieces, but nothing of the kind happens; they take the field and begin again.

It is on the same principle that the Arab or Turkish horsemen charge their horses against a wall and quickly pull them up, making the sudden immobility of repose succeed to the violence of the running. The ancient Venetians used to see these equestrian fantasies in the Atmeidan of Constantinople, and have transferred them to the usage of their native land, where the horse is, as it were, a chimerical creature.

More than one young patrician still wears the traditional jacket, cap, and girdle, and himself guides his gondola with much skill. Foreigners also have a taste for it, chiefly the English, in their character of a nautical nation. Several of them hire masters of the gondola and exercise themselves in the difficult art of "swimming" *a la Venétienne*.

Every morning a young gentleman of a very lofty air passed by under our balcony, who worked at his lesson at the oar conscientiously and perspiringly; he made visible progress, and by this time ought to be in condition to be received into the society of the Nicoletti or of the Castellani; if he continues he will perhaps aspire to the baptism with Sepia ink, still conferred in secret, which is connected with the consecration of a chief of the factions among the gondoliers.

There are many fine sunsets in Paris. When one goes forth from the Tuileries by way of the Place de la Concorde and when one turns one's face toward the

Champs Elysées, it is difficult not to be dazzled by the magnificent spectacle which presents itself: the masses of trees, the Egyptian obelisk, the magical perspective of the great avenue, the triumphal gate of the Arc de l'Etoile, make an admirable frame for the planet which extinguishes itself in splendors more brilliant to our eyes than those of day.

But there is something still more beautiful: it is a sunset in Venice when one is coming from the Lido, from Quintavalle or the Public Gardens.

The line of houses of the Giudecca which cuts off the dome of the Church of the Redeemer; the point of the Customhouse lifting its square tower, surmounted by two Hercules supporting a Fortune; the two cupolas of Santa Maria della Salute, rounded like breasts full of milk, form a marvelously undulating vista which is strongly detached upon the sky and forms the ground-work of the picture.

The Isle of Saint George Majeur, more in the foreground, serves as a set-off, with its church, its dome, and its bell-turret of brick, a diminutive of the Campanile, which can be seen on the right above the ancient Library and the Ducal Palace.

All these edifices, bathed in shadow, since the light is behind them, have azure, lilac, and violet tints, on which are outlined in black the concourse of vessels at anchor; above them spreads a conflagration of splendor; the sun goes down amidst accumulations of topazes, of rubies, of amethysts, which vary their color each instant, through the clouds changing their form; dazzling rockets leap out from between the two cupolas of *la Salute*, and sometimes, according to the place where one is standing, the spire of Palladio cuts in two the disk of the planet. This, without doubt, is very beautiful, but what doubles the magic of the spectacle, is its repetition in the water.

This going to bed of the sun, more magnificent than

that of any king, has the lagoon for a mirror ; all these lights, all these beams, all these fires, all these phosphorescences, stream over the rippling waves in sparkles, in spangles, in prisms, in trails of flame. This one glitters, that scintillates, this blazes up, that is stirred in a perpetual luminous shimmer. The bell-turret of Saint George Majeur, with its opaque shadow stretched out in the distance, stands forth in black upon this aquatic conflagration, which increases it in an extraordinary way and gives it the appearance of having its base at the bottom of the abyss.

The outline of the edifices seems to swim between two skies or between two seas. Is it the water which reflects the sky, or the sky which reflects the water? The eye hesitates, and everything is confused in the general bewilderment.

This spectacle recalls to us that passage of the *Magicien prodigieux* of Calderon, where the poet, describing a sunset by the mouth of the student Cyprian, paints the clouds and the waves which make

“ A tomb of silver for the great corpse of gold.”

But here let us leave this impossible painting, regretting that Ziem, who made so beautiful a sunrise at sea, of azure, silver, and rose, off the *Piazzetta*, has not given us a setting taken from San Servolo or from the bank of the Schiavoni; the fact will absolve us for our description.

We went ashore at the landing-place of the *Piazzetta*, encumbered by a great crowd of gondolas, and directed our steps towards the *Piazza* by way of the arcades of the ancient Library of Sansovino. Let us note in passing a characteristic detail: at convenient places, where with us a Rambuteau column might be raised, a great black cross is placed with the word *rispetto*, a recommendation which is not very piously followed. It is a

singular use to make of the sign of our redemption to employ it to protect suspicious corners. Is there not some reminiscence of paganism in it, a translation of the verse of Horace, in the Italian mode:

“Children, go farther on; this place is sacred.”

We beg pardon of our readers, especially of our female readers, for this somewhat familiar remark, but it is a feature of manners which one can and ought to make note of. It depicts Italy, perhaps, better than a long general dissertation.

It is on the *Piazza*, at about eight o'clock in the evening, that the life of Venice reaches its maximum of intensity. One could not imagine anything more gay, more lively, more amusing. The setting sun illumines with the most vivid rose the façade of Saint Mark, which seems to blush with pleasure and scintillates brightly in that last ray. Some belated pigeons regain the gable or the cornice where they will sleep until morning with their heads under their wings.

The *Piazza* is lined with cafés, like the Palais Royal at Paris, to which it offers more than one point of resemblance. The most famous of all is the Café Florian, the rendezvous of the aristocracy. Then comes the Cafés Sutil, Quadri, Costanza, frequented by the Greeks; the Emperor of Austria, where the Germans and Levantines meet.

These cafés have nothing remarkable in the way of ornamentation, especially if one compares them to the superb establishments of this type, overloaded with gilding, paintings, and plate glass, which Paris possesses. They consist of very simple rooms with quite low ceilings, in which no one lingers save on the worst days of winter; the only characteristic decoration that we are able to note are some panels of stained glass in filigree work, forming the inner doors of the Café Florian.

The former proprietor of the Café Florian was highly esteemed by the old Venetian nobility, to whom he rendered services of various kinds. He was also the friend of Canova, who modeled the landlord's leg when attacked by the gout, in order that his shoemaker might make shoes which would not hurt him. This trait of good fellowship on the part of the illustrious artist, before whom the beautiful Pauline Borghese did not disdain to pose nude, is touching.

The coffee of Venice, as we have already remarked, is excellent; it is served on copper trays, accompanied by a glass of cognac, the sipping of which fills all the leisure hours of the Venetians. There is nothing remarkable about the ices except their cheapness; they are far from possessing the exquisite refinement of the Spanish iced drinks. We never discovered anything peculiar to the place except a certain *sorbet au raisin* or *vert-jus*, very refreshing and agreeable.

The customers seat themselves under the arcades or upon the *Piazza* itself, where wooden chairs, benches and tables are installed before each café. Sometimes tents and striped banners are set up in the middle of the Place with a pleasing effect; this picturesque custom has, however, disappeared. The motley blinds are also commencing to become scarce; they are too frequently replaced with horrible strips of blue cloth, like kitchen aprons. It is less gaudy and in better taste say the civilized.

The flower girls, very obliging, very shrewd, but nevertheless of a fierce virtue, if the stories told of Englishmen who fall in love with them and throw bank-notes by the handful into their baskets without the least success are to be believed, flutter about on the Place, and make gay the passer-by and the purchasers of their pretty nose-gays; when any one refuses to buy they laughingly give him a little bouquet and run off. It is not the custom

to pay them on the spot,—that would be indelicate; but one gives them from time to time a little piece of money in the guise of a present.

To the flower sellers succeed the vendors of frosted fruits who go about crying, “Caramel ! Caramel !” in a deafening way. Their outfit consists of a basket containing grapes, figs, pears, and plums, covered with a shining crust of candied sugar.

One of them, a little fellow of a dozen years, amused us by the prodigious volubility with which he uttered his cry. We gave him some money and he always stopped to talk to us. His relations with foreigners of all countries had made him a polyglot, and there was scarcely a language of which he did not possess some few words. This Parisian gamin on the pavement of Venice was full of intelligence, and very quick. It appeared that the viceroy had even provided a little pension to assist in bringing him up, but the young seller of sweets had compromised himself under the government of Manin; he had been a drummer of the Republic, and his prowess had caused him to lose his position as a pensioner of the State.

One evening, a most beautiful one, on which he offered his wares with perhaps too much importunity, he received a terrible blow from a cane on his poor little, thin shoulder; he said nothing and did not cry, but he launched toward the brute a glance which signified, “Good for a *coltellata* some years hence.” We hope that this account will be settled like that of Loredano. In a movement of very natural indignation we had already raised a stool in order to crack the skull of that wretched villain in Sunday clothes; but a lack of moral courage, to which we reproach ourselves for having yielded, stayed our hand. We recoiled before a tumult and an explanation in a dialect which was not familiar to us.

We had also for friends a collection of little beggars,

boys and girls, very dishevelled and very ragged, very blonde and very rosy under their dirt and tan, and who only needed a bath in three or four pails of water in order to make them swim in the ultramarine of the skies of Veronese. One of them had a pair of pantaloons made of selvages of cloth sewed together, which produced the most singular medley. On one of these bands could be read "Manufactory of cloths of Elbeuf," in yellow letters on a blue ground. This harlequin garment, composed of clippings, made the most picturesque rig in the world.

We sometimes gave a "Zwanzig" to a little girl, the most intelligent of the band, on condition of her sharing it with the others; and it was very droll to see her going to find the money-changer in order to procure the change necessary to make the division, or the little rogues drawing from their tatters what might be necessary to make the change between their share and the larger coin she had given them.



## CHAPTER XV

### THE VENETIANS—WILLIAM TELL— GIROLAMO

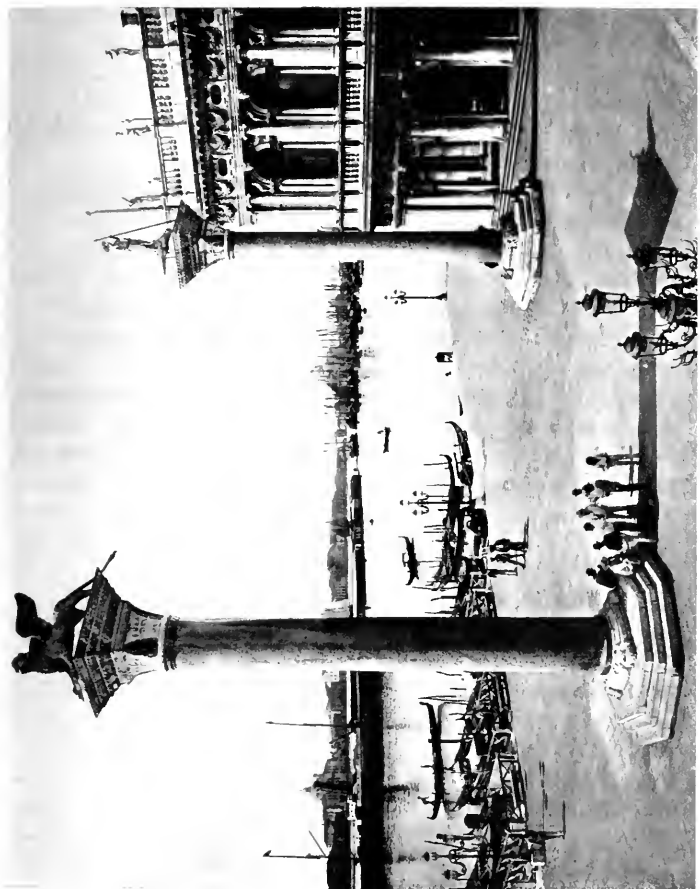
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IF there is anything in the world in the shape of indolence and laziness that is delightful, it is the mode of life of the Venetians of the upper class. The use of the gondola has gotten them out of the habit of walking. They scarcely know how to take a step. There is necessary, in order for them to risk themselves in the open air, a combination of atmospheric conditions rare even in that soft and pleasant climate.

The sirocco, the sun, a cloud which threatens rain, a too fresh sea-breeze are sufficient reasons for their remaining indoors; a mere nothing depresses them; a mere trifle fatigues them, and their greatest exertion is to go from their sofa to their balcony to breathe the fragrance of one of their big flowers which blooms so well in the moist and tepid air of Venice. This nonchalant and retired life gives them a pale and pearly whiteness of skin, a delicacy of complexion almost incredible.

When by chance one of those privileged days arrives which are called with us "*temps de demoiselle*," some few of them take two or three turns on the Place Saint Mark, at the hour when the military band plays its evening symphony, and rest a long time in front of the Café Florian, opposite a glass of water opalized by a drop of anise, in the company of their husbands, brothers or cavaliers in waiting; but this is rare, especially in the months ruled by the dog-star, during which the patrician or rich families take refuge on the mainland in their villas, on the border of the Brenta, or upon their estates







in Friulia, on account of the exhalations of the lagunes, which are said to be unhealthy and to cause fevers.

In other days the Levantines abounded in Venice; their pelisses, their dolmans, their ample coats of striking colors picturesquely diversified the crowd, through which they passed impassive and grave. There are fewer of them to-day, since commerce has turned away and takes the road to Trieste; but Greeks are frequently met with, with caps surmounted by a vast topknot of silk, a head of bluish-black hair which spreads over the shoulders, with shaven temples, hair floating out behind, and characteristic physiognomy, whose beautiful national dress does not harmonize with the hideous modern costume. These Greeks, the majority of whom are only traders or captains of small vessels from Zante, Corfu, Cyprus, or Syria, have a singular majesty of figure, and the nobility of their ancient race is written upon their features as in a book of gold. They betake themselves in groups of three or four to the corner of the *Piazza*, to the *Café de la Costanza*, which enjoys the monopoly of offering the mocha and the pipe to the children of the Levant.

Around the *cafés* perambulate wandering musicians who play bits of operas, tenor voices singing *Lucia* or some other air of Donizetti, with that supple voice and that admirable Italian facility, in which instinct mimics talent so far as to be mistaken for it; a Chinese puppet-show, differing from ours in that the background of the tableau is black and the figures white, rapidly unfolds itself, framed in a canvas booth. The showman, a species of *gracioso* clothed in an old-fashioned dress-coat, and wearing a kind of cocked hat, explains that in other days he was an opera *impressario*, but that by reason of the high price of the tenors and the capricious temper of the *prima donnas*, he has been reduced to poverty and no longer directs anything but Chinese puppets, — a docile company, and not expensive.

But a group forms in the middle of the Place ; only a distracted attention is given the tenor ; the Chinese puppets see the circle of their spectators broken ; the vendors of caramel cease their monotonous cries ; the chairs execute a quarter turn ; all is silent. The desks have been arranged, the music placed in position, the military band arrives, plays a prelude, begins the performance. It is the overture to *William Tell*.

Just as the Italians have the instinct of vocal music, the Germans have the instinct of instrumental music. The overture is played with a correctness that is altogether admirable ; still, there is wanting that energy, that animation, that savage ardor which that revolutionary music imperiously demands. All that renders love, the delights of a pastoral life, the snows of the mountain, the emerald of the prairie, the azure of the lake, the sound of bells, the fresh Alpine perfumes, is expressed with a profound and poetic sentiment ; but the accents of revolt and of liberty, the indignation of a spirited soul oppressed by tyranny, all the tumultuous, boiling part of the work, is rendered in a feeble, timorous manner, evasive in some degree, as if a mysterious censorship had ordered these noises of clarions to be extinguished in an effeminate harmony ; this whistling of arrows, these bitter groans of a people which shakes its chains.

It even seemed as though it was meant to prevent the Venetians from thinking that the cap of Gessler, the sign of the Austrian domination before which it was necessary to bow the head, is forever fixed at the top of its mast. The three masts of Saint Mark, with their yellow and black banners, are there to render the comparison easy, and the overture, played with great vigor, might well convey the idea of overthrowing the insignia of the tyrant.

The overture ended, the crowd slowly retires. Soon there remain only occasional pedestrians, when the

*birrichini*, a species of ruffians whose most honest business is the sale of contraband cigars, pursue you with their suspicious propositions; for while one still reads in the tales of travelers that night is turned into day in Venice, it is no less true that at midnight the *Piazza* is deserted, and certainly more solitary than the Boulevard de Gand at the same hour. This will not prevent tourists, on the faith of old conditions which they apply to customs fallen into desuetude since the fall of the Republic, from saying for fifty years yet that the Place Saint Mark swarms with people until morning.

That was true when the apartments which rise upon the arcades of the old and new Procuraties were occupied by faro banks, places of assembly and casinos, when all this nocturnal world of nobles, chevaliers of industry and courtesans moved in a perpetual carnival in which nothing was wanting, not even the mask, and of which Casanova of Seingalt has left in his memoirs such curious pictures.

The offices of the commercial brokers, the shops where the glassware of Murano, the collars of shells and of coral, the models of gondolas, are sold; the shops for engravings, cards, and views of Venice, for the use of foreigners, were closed one after another. Nothing remained open except the cafés and the tobacco stores.

It was time to regain our gondola, which awaited us at the landing-place of the *Piazzetta*, near the lantern of the Duchess of Berry. The moon had risen; and nothing is more charming than an excursion by moonlight along the Grand Canal or the *Giudecca*. It is a romantic satisfaction which it is hardly permissible for an enthusiastic traveler of the class described by Hoffmann to deny himself on a beautiful clear night in August.

We had still another reason for wandering on the lagoon at an hour at which it would be wiser for us to envelope ourselves in our mosquito net. Who has not heard

the gondoliers spoken of, who sing octaves of Tasso and boatmen's songs in that Venetian patois, so broken, so zigzagging that it seems an infantile stuttering? The gondoliers have not sung for a long time. Nevertheless the tradition is not yet lost; the old folk of the landing-place preserve in the depths of their memories some episode of the *Jérusalem délivrée*, of which they ask nothing better than to remind themselves in consideration of some glasses of Cyprus. Like the girls of Ischia, who only wear their fine Greek costumes for the English, they only display their melodies knowingly and to the accompaniment of guineas.

We accordingly gave to old Girolamo, who was found for us by Antonio, some small gold pieces, that he might play for us between sky and water that musico-picturesque comedy, of which we asked nothing better than to be the dupe.

Girolamo was a droll fellow, bronzed by the sun, the sea-air and the numerous libations which he allowed himself in order to sustain the suppleness of his throat; the song being salty, he was obliged, he said, to drink much; each stanza affected him like ham or caviare.

When we were somewhat in the offing of the vast canal of the *Giudecca*, which is almost an arm of the sea, nearly opposite the Church of the Jesuits, the white façade of which the moon silvered, Girolamo, after having lubricated his bronchial tubes with a big bumper, sang for us in a guttural voice, a trifle hoarse, but which reached a long distance on the water, with trills and prolonged cadences after the manner of the Tyrolean singers, *la Biondina in gondoletta*, *Pronta la gondoletta*, and the episode of *Herminie chez les Bergers*.

The first of these barcarolles is charming; Rossini has not disclaimed to place one or two couplets of it in the singing lesson in the *Barber of Seville*; it might almost be considered the type of its kind, both air and words;

the others are hardly more than variations of this theme. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to translate into a formal language all the pretty turns and charming diminutives of the Venetian dialect. It has to do with an amorous excursion on the water.

"A pretty blonde," says the song, has entered a gondola and has fallen asleep in the boat on the arm of a gondolier, who awakens her from time to time, but the motion of the barge soon puts the pretty child to sleep again; the moon is half hidden in the clouds, the lagoon is calm and the wind is gentle; only a light breeze stirs the locks of the pretty one and lifts the veil which covers her breast; in contemplating fixedly the perfection of her charms, that lovely, simple face, that mouth and those charming breasts, the gondolier feels a madness in his heart, a great disturbance, a species of bliss he knows not how to explain; he at first, for a short while, respects and guards that tranquil repose, although love tempts him and counsels him to disturb it. And softly, very softly he allows himself to slip down by the side of the girl, at the bottom of the boat; but who could find repose with fire for his neighbor? Finally, wearied by this prolonged slumber, he becomes bold, and certainly has not occasion to repent of his audacity. "Oh, mon Dieu!" he cries in his naïve simplicity, "what lovely things she has said and I have done! Never in all my days have I been so happy!"

We made the mistake of keeping our singer with us in our boat instead of placing him in a boat at a distance or of listening to the song from the shore, for this kind of music sounds better from a distance than close at hand; but, more of a poet than a musician, we were anxious to catch the words.

In the octave of Tasso, Girolamo drew his breath just in the middle of the verse and finished with a kind of weird trill, designed, doubtless, to sustain the rhythm and to make it carry.

At a distance this rude and strongly accentuated singing assumes harmony, and by its very singularity gives more pleasure than an opera air sung by Mario or Rubini. There are moments of silence, languor, and obscurity in which the soul seems to wait for a melody to gush forth from the bottom of all this calm, and the first human voice which comes from the bosom of the sea, the least chord of a piano filtering through the opening of a balcony, are hailed as beneficences.

In retailing his repertoire, Girolamo had made such frequent embraces of the bottle that we were obliged to land for a fresh supply from a public-house on the *Fondamente delle Zattere*. His bottle refilled, he sang once more with all his verve.

Made lively by the guzzling of a half-bottle of wine *de Val Policella* he undertook to mimic the sounds which the ducks make when, surprised in the marsh, they fly away brushing the top of the water and uttering those "kouan, kouan" which Aristophanes was not afraid to transfer to a chorus of onomatopœia in some mad comedy of frogs or of birds.

To speak truly, it was the finest piece of his repertoire: he mimicked the duck in a way calculated to deceive the bird itself, and Antonio allowed his oar to drag and laughed until the tears came.

Girolamo seemed very proud of this talent and valued it more highly than all the rest. He imitated also the whistling of the bombs which he had had occasion to study from nature during the siege. As he imitated with his mouth the flight of the missiles and their fall into the water, his eyes flashed peculiarly, and he drew himself up with a certain haughtiness. Although he had not said a word which might betray him, for prudence never abandons a Venetian, it was not difficult to understand that he had taken an active part and passed powder and munitions more than once in his gondola



under the fire of the batteries. More than one of those bombs which he parodied so well he had seen fall near him.

Moreover, the government has not endeavored to maintain silence in regard to its deeds. Quite numerous advertisements of works relating to the siege of Venice cover the walls of the Procuraties. There is even a sort of diorama which represents the principal events of the siege and of the defense. This tolerance, we admit, has somewhat surprised us; but it is part, it is said, of a political policy; which seeks to have the Austrian domination found to be more mild than the absolute régime of the Pontifical States or of the Kingdom of Naples.

When one does not know Venice and has read in newspapers the story of that heroic and long defense, one expects to find a ravaged city, scarred by bombs, with heaps of debris and shattered roofs. Aside from some stones carried away from the Labbia Palace and some excoriations of projectiles on the dome and façade of San Geremia, at the end of the Grand Canal, there are no evidences of the siege visible. To witness the ravages of the siege it is necessary to go to the islands around the forts and outworks which protect this city, almost impregnable on account of its situation in the midst of vast and shallow lagunes which render the approach of heavy artillery impossible. The Austrians had intended to use aerostatic shells; but the wind deflected them from their course or they were raised too high, exploding in the air and doing harm to no one. These balloon bombs even became a source of amusement for the populace, who regarded them bursting in the sky as some sort of fireworks.

Venice, before which Attila recoiled, remained free from all invasion for fourteen hundred years; up to 1797 it preserved the form of a republic. Struck with that

senile terror which precipitates to their ruin decaying states, it surrendered itself without contest to a conqueror who, better appreciating its resources and situation than it did itself, did not believe it could be taken and was about to pass it by on his road. And since then no doge mounted on his Bucentaur has been able to celebrate his nuptials with the sea. The Adriatic no longer wears on its finger the azure ring of gold of its spouse, and the eagle of Austria sinks its hooked beak into the flank of the winged lion of Saint Mark. But let us leave this political consideration and return to the Campo San Mose.

The great business before going to bed is to hunt for the *zinzares*, the atrocious mosquitoes which especially torment foreigners, upon whom they throw themselves with the pleasure that a gourmet takes in relishing exotic and rare viands.

The grocers and pharmacists sell a fumigating powder which is burned on a chafing dish, all windows being closed, and which drives away or suffocates the terrible insects. We believe this powder to be more disagreeable to human beings than to the mosquitoes, and numerous bites on our hands and face testify in the morning to the inefficiency of the remedy.

The wisest plan is not to place a light near one's bed and to wrap oneself hermetically in the gauze of the mosquito net. Fortunately we have a southern skin, tanned by the air, burned by travel, which repulses the proboscis and the borings of these nocturnal drinkers of blood; but there are people with a more delicate epidermis, who are compelled to endure a real punishment. The skin is inflamed and covered with pustules; the face swells under these venomous pustules which cause an insufferable itching. With certain persons we have known a fever to follow these infernal nights; it is sufficient, in order not to close one's eyes all night, to shut

up in the net with you one of these buzzing monsters; but we were already acclimated.

The silence of Venice is often spoken of; but one must not lodge near a landing-place in order to find this statement true. There went on under our window whisperings, laughter, shouts, songs, a perpetual disturbance, which did not stop until two o'clock in the morning. The gondoliers, who sleep all day while waiting to be hired, are at night as wakeful as cats, and hold their conventicles, which are scarcely less noisy, under the arch of some bridge or on the steps of some landing-place. We had both the bridge and the landing. Seated on a marble step or on the poop of their gondolas, they eat shell-fish, drink Friulian wine, and sup gaily by the light of the stars and the little lamps at the street corners lighted in front of the niches of the Madonnas. Certain of their friends, voluptuous vagabonds who have church porticoes for alcoves and for mattresses the big flagstones warmed by the day's sun, come to join them and increase the tumult. Add to these some pretty servant-girls, taking advantage of the slumber of their mistresses to go to meet some big fellow with bronzed skin, shaggy cap, and jacket of Persian cotton, dragging around on his breast more amulets than an American savage has of colored glass beads, and whose contralto voices, by turns shrill and deep, flow on in waves of inexhaustible chatter with that sonorousness peculiar to the languages of the South, and you have a very clear idea of the silence of Venice.



## CHAPTER XVI

### THE ARSENAL—FUSINE

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THE weather was fine, and the fancy seized us, in view of the brightness of the sky, to go for breakfast to the free port on the isle of San Georges Majeur, and on the same trip, to visit the beautiful church of Palladio, whose red bell-turret makes so fine an effect upon the lagune. The façade has been slightly retouched by Scamozzi; the interior contains, in addition to the necessary accompaniment of enormous pictures by Tintoretto, — that robust workman who painted acres of *chefs-d'œuvre*, — columns of Greek marble, gilded altars, statues in stone, in bronze, an admirable choir in sculptured carpentry, representing various scenes from the life of Saint Benoit, which reminded us of the wonderful sculptures in wood by Berreguete, in the Spanish cathedrals. This fine piece of work was carved with a charming art and unheard-of patience by Albert of Brule, one of those talented persons who pass unknown in the overproduction of geniuses, products of the centuries which preceded us, and with whom human memory has not charged itself. A pretty statuette of bronze, located on the balustrade of the choir, on the right when coming from the portico, and representing Saint George, offers the peculiarity of bearing a closer resemblance to Lord Byron than any portrait which was ever made of him. This portraiture by anticipation, and, as it were, prophetic, struck us forcibly. One does not know where there is to be seen elsewhere anything more elegant, more disdainfully aristocratic, more English, in a word, than this head of a Greek saint, whose lip is contracted with the sneer of the poet of Don Juan. We do

not know whether the noble lord, who lived in Venice for a long time and who must necessarily have visited the church of Saint George Majeur, remarked as we did this really unique resemblance, and who doubtless would have felt flattered by it.

Behind the church, built on the point of the island which looks toward the *Piazzetta*, are spread out the warehouses of the port, and the docks of the free port.

After getting through the door guarded by the customs officers, one traverses some courts surrounded by arcades of considerable height and filled with neglected vegetation, and arrives at a sort of public-house or wine-shop, the rendezvous of sailors and gondoliers who there enjoy the sweets of drinking wine free of duty, somewhat like the workmen of Paris going to enjoy themselves outside the barriers. The tavern is always filled with people, and the customers stretch themselves out upon the benches around the wooden tables for which the shadow of the church serves as an arbor. Rapscale lions pushing wheelbarrows loaded with bales circulate in the midst of the toppers, whom they eye with an air of envy, and near whom they will come to sit down when they have earned the few sous necessary for these frugal orgies. Opposite the wine-shop, a great empty storehouse, whose barred windows open on a deserted lane, serves for a refuge to those wearied of the somewhat turbulent gaiety, and for loving couples seeking solitude.

One is served there with mullet from the Adriatic (*trigli*) so appetizing, so red, of so fresh a shade that one would eat them merely for the pleasure of the color, were they not, as indeed they are, the best in the world; peaches, grapes, a bottle of Cyprus wine, and some coffee, make a breakfast exquisite in its simplicity, and if by chance you put your hand upon a good Havana cigar which you smoke in the bottom of your gondola returning toward the shore of the Schiavoni, we do not see

much that can be wanting to your happiness, if in addition you have received pleasant letters from France the evening before.

It is early, and before going to visit Fusine, we shall have time to visit the Arsenal, not the interior, which is at present forbidden; but we can — and it interests us more than the sight of stacks of muskets and ships in process of construction — admire from the outside the lions of the Piræus, trophies secured by Morosini in the war of the Peloponnesus.

These two colossal figures in pentelic marble are denuded of that zoological verity which Barye without doubt gave them, but they have something about them so haughty, so grand, so divine, if that adjective can be applied to animals, that they produce a profound impression. Their gilded whiteness stands out admirably from the red façade of the Arsenal, composed of a portico filled with statues of a merit that this terrible vicinage causes to resemble puppets, and two small towers of red brick indented and hemmed about with stones like the houses of the Place Royale of Paris. Trophies of a defeat, but preserving always their proud and haughty mien, they have the air of remembering, in the City of Saint Mark, the ancient Minerva; and the great Goethe has celebrated them by an epigram which we translate here, begging pardon for substituting our paltry verses for the Olympian rhymes of the Jupiter of Weimar:

Deux grands lions rapportés de l'Attique,  
Font sentinelle aux murs de l'Arsenal,  
Paisiblement, et près du couple antique,  
Tout est petit, porte, tour et canal.

Ils semblent faits pour le char de Cybèle,  
Tant ils sont fiers, et la mère des dieux  
Voudrait au joug ployer leur cou rebelle,  
Si pour la terre elle quittait les cieux.

Mais maintenant ils gardent la poterne,  
Tristes, sans gloire, et l'on entend ici  
Miauler partout le chat ailé moderne,  
Que pour patron Venise s'est choisi !

The Arsenal, with its immense docks, its covered ship-yards, in which, it is said, a galley could be constructed, rigged, equipped, and launched upon the sea in one day, recalls to us, by its gloomy abandonment, that of Carthagera in Spain, so active in the times of the Invincible Armada. It was from there that the fleets set out that were to conquer Corfu, Zante, Cyprus, Athens, all those rich and beautiful isles of the archipelago ; but then Venice was Venice ; and the lion of Saint Mark, today dejected and defamed, then had claws and teeth like the most ferocious heraldic monsters, and in spite of the epigram of Goethe made a haughty and triumphant figure on the blasonings.

Our excursion to Fusine needed two rowers ; a companion of Antonio joined him. A bit of sail was even carried in order to secure the aid of the wind, which was favorable.

We passed between Saint George and the point of the *Giudecca*, whose entire length we traversed, grazing its gardens full of vines and fruit trees, and entered the lagune properly so called.

The sky was perfectly clear, and the light so vivid that the water shone like silver, and the limits of the horizon could not be distinguished from the sea. The isles seemed like little brown specks, and the distant vessels seemed to sail in the open sky. The power of reasoning was really necessary in order to persuade oneself that they were not floating in the air. The eye alone would surely be deceived. The viaduct of the railway, a gigantic work which joins Venice to the mainland, and which we discovered far off on the right, afforded a singular effect of mirage. Its numerous

arches, repeated by the calm, blue water, with the exactitude of the purest plate glass, formed perfect circles and resembled those bizarre Chinese doors, entirely round, which one sees on screens; in a way, that architectural fantasy of Pekin seemed to have built that chimerical avenue for the City of the Doges, the silhouette of which, serrated with numerous bell-turrets, and dominated by the Campanile surmounted by its angel of gold, presented itself on one side in an unexpected and picturesque fashion.

After having passed a fortified islet, having on its point a charming statue of the Madonna and a very ugly Austrian sentinel, we followed one of those canals traced in the lagoon by a double row of posts which indicate the channels where the water is sufficiently deep; for the lagoon is a species of salt marsh which the ebb and flow of the tide keeps from becoming stagnant, but which has hardly more than three or four feet of water, except in certain lanes hollowed out by nature or by man, and which the posts to which we have referred designate. Some of these posts carry on their summits little chapels in miniature, rude dyptichs constructed by the piety of the sailors and which contain images and statuettes of the Madonna. The gracious protectress whom the Litany calls *Stella Maris*, the Star of the Sea, is there in the midst of her element. These Madonnas in the water have something pathetic about them. Assuredly her divinity is always present, and her protection descends from the sky as quickly as it lifts itself from the sea; but this pious credulity of a more immediate succor, the protectress being transported into the midst of the peril, has something about it of the infantile, the charming, and the poetic. We dearly love these Venetian Madonnas, corroded by the salty vapor and lashed by the wing of the passing gull, and we willingly say to them: "*Ave Maria, gratia plena.*" The blue



line of the Euganean mountains is faintly outlined in front of us by the tender blue of the sky, rather as a vein of a deeper azure than as a terrestrial reality.

The trees and houses on the shore which can already be seen, seem, on account of the slope of the sea, to plunge into the water up to their knees, and the red bell-turrets of the islets, diminutives of the Campanile, which has the air of the Burgrave of that generation of bell-turrets, seem to break forth immediately from the waves like great branches of coral.

A low-lying land, covered with confused vegetation, was before us. We leaped out of the gondola. We had arrived at Fusine.

It is at Fusine that the canals of Brenta come to an end, the locality where Venice sought its supply of water to fill its cisterns, before the artesian wells bored by M. Degousée with rare good fortune, abundantly supplied it with a clear water, limpid and sometimes gaseous, like that of which we drank a glass, near the convent of the Capuchin fathers, at the *Giudecca*.

The ravages of war are not yet repaired at Fusine ; some houses are opened to the wind by bullets, some roofs are torn off by shells ; a little rustic chapel is intact ; perhaps the house of God may have been respected in the struggle, perhaps it may have been repaired before those of men.

This fertile, moist soil, impregnated with sea salts, made thick by the vegetable detritus, warmed by a vivifying sun, causes to increase abundantly in the desert and the solitude, the uncultivated flora of those charming plants called weeds because they are free. There is a little virgin forest of them ; the wild oat waves its bearded stalk on the border of the ditches ; the hemlock tosses above a tuft of nettles its greenish-white umbels ; the wild mallow displays its curled leaves and its flowers of a pale rose ; the bind-weed hangs its silvery bell-

flowers on the branches of brambles ; in the midst of the grass, which mounts to your knees, scintillate like sparks a thousand unnamed little flowers, spangles of gold, of azure, or of purple, scattered around by the Great Colorist in order to break the uniform tint of green.

On the banks of the canals the water-lily displays its large stieky hearts and lifts up its yellow flowers ; the arrow-head makes its lancehead tremble in the wind ; the loosestrife with its willow leaves inclines its purple stalks ; the iris brandishes its glaucous poniards, the ribboned calamus, the flowering rushes, become entangled in a bushy and picturesque disorder. Elders, hazels, shrubs, and trees which no one prunes, throw their shadow, pierced by the sun, upon this fertile disorder.

Lizards, lively, alert, wriggling their tails, cross the narrow footpath. Choirs of frogs plunge as you pass, with a simultaneous leap, under the grass of the Brenta. A beautiful water-adder, while we were passing along the canal, devoted itself fearlessly to the most graceful evolutions. It swam rapidly, its head erect, making its supple body undulate, a flash of sapphire lightning traversing the silvery water ; it seemed a queen playing in her domain and disquieting herself very little on account of our presence. She barely cast towards us a glance from her gemmed eyes, as if to say, " Why comes this intruder here ? " It was the first time in our life that a reptile had seemed pretty to us. Perhaps this charming adder was descended in a curved line from the serpent who seduced Eve by the grace of his spiral movements and the eloquence of his speech. In returning we found her at the same place, parading herself like a coquette and making faces of Celimene along the bank in order to beg a look, or, what is more likely, to attract a timid lover crouching under the water-cresses or in the reeds.

Locks and dams, picturesquely placed, hold back the water at stated distances. Light brick arches, which serve upon occasion for buttresses or for bridges, frequently traverse the canal, but all are tottering, half ruined, invaded by vegetation which slips into the place of a brick or a stone which happens to fall, already half retaken by nature, so prompt to efface the work of man. This abandonment is regrettable from the point of view of the engineer, but not at all from that of the poet or painter.

This uncultivated corner of Fusine gave us the greatest pleasure, and remains graven in our mind much more clearly than localities which are more deserving. Closing our eyes, we still see in the dark chamber of memory, although a year already separates us from that impression, the veins of the leaves, the shadows of the trees passed on the path, the honey-bees rolling in the calyx of the marshmallows, a thousand little insignificant details of a perfect clearness.

Probably this pleasing effect of freshness and solitude was responsible for our sojourn of several weeks in Venice, where one only sees, as we have already remarked, marble, sky, and water.

Wearied perhaps, without perceiving it, of gliding in a gondola upon the water, or on foot upon the polished flagstones of the Place of Saint Mark, we found a secret joy in pressing the naked breast of the mother of Cybele. Saturated with art, statues, pictures, palaces, intoxicated by the genius of man, we were impelled, by a reaction in favor of nature, to find charming this bit of earth abandoned to the luxuriance of a wild vegetation. We who respect life to the point of not gathering a single flower, had plucked enormous bouquets and masses of foliage in order to carry them to the Campo San Mose.

In returning the gondolier took us through streets of water that we were yet unacquainted with. Cities in

decadence are like bodies which are dying; life, taking refuge in the heart, abandons little by little the extremities; some streets are depopulated, some quarters become deserted, the blood has no longer the force to go to the end of the veins. The entrance into Venice, coming from Fusine, is of a heart-breaking melancholy. A few row-boats, bringing goods from the mainland, glide silently upon the sleeping water past deserted houses. Palaces of a charming architecture no longer have windows, and the bays are closed by planks roughly placed across them; the rough-coating of the abandoned houses is scaling off, the moss spreads its green carpet on the lower strata, shell-fish and marine plants incrust the stairways, which the crab alone ascends to-day.

From the windows of the infrequently inhabited houses hang rags and tatters, linen hung out to dry alone indicating the life of the impoverished household which has sought a refuge there.

Here and there a grating magnificently worked, a balcony with complicated scroll-work, a corroded coat-of-arms, columnettes of marble, a sculptured cornice on a wall, cracked, blackened, dilapidated for want of care, reveal an ancient splendor, the palace of a patrician family which has become extinct or fallen into poverty.

In proportion as we advance, this sorrowful impression is dissipated; life returns little by little, and with pleasure one finds himself in the animation of the Grand Canal or the Place Saint Mark.

The time at Fusine had seemed short to us; yet it was already the hour for dinner. The crabs, which multiply abundantly in the canals, were beginning to lift above the line traced by the water at the foot of the houses their hideous bodies and long, hooked pincers, a manœuvre which they execute every day at six o'clock in the evening, with the punctuality of a chronometer.

We went to dine that day at the Campo San Gallo, a place situated behind the *Piazza*, in a German *gasthof*, where we refreshed ourselves with some *vini nostrani*, black as the juice of the mulberry and with a *schoppen* of Munich beer.

We took our refreshments in the open air, under a tent striped with white and saffron bands, side by side with French painters, German artists, and Austrian officers, small, young persons, blonde, slender, well-groomed in elegant uniforms, very polite, very well-bred, with the physiognomy of Werther, and in no wise having soldiers' manners. The conversation was generally æsthetic, interrupted now and then by one of those complicated and labored pleasantries, memories of Jena, of Bonn, or of Heidelberg. The inclined cap of the *maison-moussue* reappeared in the form of the military shako.

In the middle of the Campo the curb of a cistern raised itself, where the women of the neighborhood and the Styrian water-carriers came to draw water at certain hours; at the end was a little church blazoned with the arms of the Patriarch of Venice, and from the door of which, closed by a red curtain, vague odors of incense mingled with the fumes of the cooking of the *gasthof*, and murmurs of prayers and of organ with the discussion of art and philosophy. From time to time a few old women, their heads enshrouded in black hoods, like bats cowed by their wings, raised the portiere and entered the church. Young girls with their hair only as covering for their heads, draped in shawls of glaring colors, passed by, fans in hand, a smile on their lips, repressing gracefully their flying skirts, and, instead of entering the church, took the little lane which leads from the *Campo San Gallo* to the *Piazza*. They will enter the church later when God only remains for them to love,—God, that last passion of women.

There passed also some fat ecclesiastics with honest

and jovial countenances, betaking themselves to the *Salute* or to some evening office. They wore violet stockings like bishops, and red scarfs like cardinals, which is a privilege, we were told, of the diocese of Saint Mark, the patriarchal metropolis.

Opposite the *gasthof*, a house of modest appearance made itself noticeable by a marble plaque bearing a Latin inscription. It was in this house that Canova died. The inscription is beautiful and touching, and we cannot resist the pleasure of repeating it here: "*Has aedes Francesconiorum quas lautioribus hospitibus ob veteris amicitiae candorem prætulerat, Canova, sculptura facile princeps, supremo halitu consecravit.*" This may be translated for the benefit of the women who do not understand Latin and for the men who have forgotten it: "This house of the Francesconi, which he had preferred to more sumptuous hospitalities, by reason of the purity of an old friendship, Canova, easily first of sculptors, has consecrated by his last breath."

We ask pardon for this somewhat barbarous translation, but it at least renders with exactness the lapidary form of the inscription. This is not the place to speak more at length of Canova, who made his debut in Venice by the exhibition of his group of Dedalus and Icarus at the Sensa (festival of the Ascension) while yet an obscure pupil of the sculptor Toretti. We shall have occasion to return to his works at Rome and at Florence.

To this house of the Francesconi, so nobly preferred to palaces, is attached for us a puerile recollection; in real life the comic goes hand in hand with the pathetic. The little dog of the house, which went to frolic on the Campo, or in the neighboring lanes, returned at this hour, that of the family repast probably, and often found the door closed. He whined piteously on the threshold, but sometimes it was not opened for him—either the servants, heedless, did not hear him, or it may be, did not

wish to let him enter for punishment. One day, touched by his distress, we went and pulled the bell-cord for him, and returned to our table. A girl appeared, greatly surprised to see no one at the door, and the dog entered with his tail lowered, half crawling upon his stomach, like a dog who was at fault.

He did not forget this service, and each time that he found himself in the same plight, he looked at me with a melancholy and suppliant air, which it was impossible to resist. A tacit accord was established between the quadruped and the biped. He gratified us with an amiable look and a wag of the tail, in compensation for the service of pulling the bell-cord. It was thus we found ourselves connected with the honest dog of the house of Francesconi, and his memory is mixed up in our mind with that of Canova.

After having dispatched our modest repast, composed of sea-louse soup, a veal steak (no others are eaten in Italy), a pudding of polenta, and stuffed sweets, taken our cup of coffee at the Florian, and read the *Journal des Débats*, the only French paper allowed in these despotic states, seeing nothing of interest on the theatre bills with which the arcades of the Procuraties are placarded, we concluded to stroll through the streets at haphazard, which is the only method of entering into the familiar life of the people, for books tell only of the monuments and of remarkable things, putting aside all the characteristic details and the thousand and one almost imperceptible differences which call our attention to the fact that we have changed our country.

A big placard posted at the bottom of the Place Saint Mark, and on the corner of the Ducal Palace near the Bridge of the Paille, where all Venice passes in going to walk on the Bank of the Slaves, promised in gigantic lettering and ferocious engravings, a wonderful and incredible show. The bill alone would frighten one. It

was a great *mimodrame* of the kind played with us at the Olympic Circus, and which those industrious annalists Lalone and Labrousse compose, the historiographers with powder and ball of the imperial epic: Napoleon in Egypt! But the prodigious part of the spectacle consisted of a Pyrrhic dance, danced by the whole French army around the First Consul. Behold here the French army and the Institute dancing a Pyrrhic around the Bonaparte of Auguste Barbier!

“ O Corse à cheveux plats! ”

A drawing in barbarous taste accompanied the bill. Bonaparte, in the stiff costume of the Guides, received the Ulemas of Cairo, humbly prostrated in their cafetans, and Turks in Siberian pelisses offering him, in conformity with ancient usage, the keys of Cairo on a barber's basin; a staff officer, breeched in pantaloons braided with ornaments of fine gold, and shod with boots *à la Souvarow*, stands behind the General-in-chief. Between the embrasures of the towers, negroes acting as sentinels could be seen passing with haggard eye. This engraving recalled vaguely, by the savagery of the drawing and the Gothic crudity of the coloring, the sketches by Epinal and the engravings by the four sons of Aymon in the editions of the Blue Library.

We did not fail, as you may imagine, to betake ourselves to this show. At eight o'clock in the evening, the hour announced for the performance, we entered our gondola. The gondola is, as everyone knows, the carriage of Venice, where one travels, not on foot, but by water. The play was at the Theatre Malibran. Stretched on the crumpled black leather cushions of our gondola, we were carried over the canals by two vigorous oars, an agreeable method of traveling. The sun had gone down; we were upon water black as that of Lethe. From time to time as we passed under



bridges, a few gas-lamps launched sudden glimmerings which streak the canal with light; then turning a corner, the black begins again, and again we are plunged in the shadow,—the shadow of night, the shadow of the water,—grazing lightly the palaces from which so many sombre stories have taken flight, from whence the great families inscribed in the Book of Gold of the most serene Republic have departed for the last and eternal journey of the tomb.

Finally our gondola approaches a landing. The rowers raise their oars and we are made fast to a ring secured to the bank. A long line of gondolas, ranged in procession, await the spectators. We issue forth and cross the bridge which leads to the Theatre Malibran. These water-carriages gathered under a bridge produce a singular effect, for it is not our custom to go to the opera or to the circus by boat.

One enters the theatre by a long, arched corridor, which resembles in its splendor the Radziwill passage-way. Odd-looking lamps hung upon the wall give light to this narrow passage. Securing a place is a long operation, and we had to pass through several ticket offices before entering our box. The first one gives the right of entrance, the second a special seat. Fortified by the supreme and sacramental ticket, we enter into our box. In Italy the arrangement of the boxes is different from what we are accustomed to in France. The seats, instead of facing the stage, are along the sides, somewhat like those of an omnibus, those on the left being reserved for ladies or for distinguished personages to whom it is desired to show honor or politeness.

The hall was very dimly lighted, and we saw tossing beneath us in the parterre and orchestra, a tumult of heads, the silhouettes of which were vaguely discernible. A dark room, with its weird microcosm, conveys an idea of it. This darkness was caused by the absence of a

chandelier. The ceiling was lacking, and the parterre saw the play by the pure light of the stars, *sub Jove crudo*. We have already mentioned this arrangement in connection with the theatre at Milan, and we will not recur to it. The footlights sufficed to illuminate the actors and, as a matter of fact, provided the stage be lighted, it is sufficient. A dimly lighted hall has in itself something of the more mysterious and the more fantastic, and prevents the attention from being distracted by the women, the toilets, and the incidents of the hall. The less one sees of the hall the more one is a spectator of the play.

A French officer has fallen into the power of the people of Mourad-Bey and is shut up in the seraglio, but as he is a Frenchman, an officer, and is twenty years of age, he very soon puts upon the skewer the hearts of all the women. The Zoraides and the Zulmi protect him. Meanwhile there is discord in the camp of Agramant; some wish to surrender the city; others wish to fight. There is a great dispute at the seraglio.

Some rogues with turbans on their heads, and who seem to have plunged their heads into pastry moulds, parade around and swear to avenge Mahomet. The Muftis with their arms crossed upon their breasts, preach the Holy War. The destruction of the General-in-chief of the French Army is decreed; it is a Mussulman of the most beautiful species, his girdle loaded with yatagans and candjars, who takes upon himself the sinister task. An idiot of an eunuch, a voluptuous gormandizer, and a poltroon also take part in the action.

In the following act we are in the French camp. Bonaparte appears with a formidable staff. It is the First Consul disguised as Emperor, by an anachronism permissible in Venice. He is encased in top boots, his hands behind his back, his waistcoat transformed into the historic snuff-box. He gives orders, displays maps, and pinches familiarly the ears of the soldiers. There-

upon the Mussulman with his long beard arrives to hand him a petition; but it is here that he raises against the General a knife three feet long in order to assassinate him, as was done to the conqueror of Ptolemais, by Kleber. Fortunately the assassin is arrested. Bonaparte pardons him and attaches him to himself by a long harangue in Arabic, delivered in Pindaric tone. The mustached and bearded Mussulman swears that he will die for the General-in-chief, and the battle begins.

The outskirts burn, the city burns, the seraglio burns, — never was there seen such a conflagration. The Muftis weep, their arms always folded, and the soldiers, throwing away their arms, weep under their pastry-moulds. It is only the women clothed in light scarfs who do not weep. In Egypt it is the women who are the men. The French officer comes forth from a trunk where love has hidden him: he takes the seraglio, he combats the Sultan Mourad-Bey, and he triumphs all along the line and in the great struggle for the flag.

Finally Bonaparte arrives, followed by his inevitable staff; he pardons everybody, lifts his eyes to Heaven, and takes a pinch of snuff, thinking of the great Frederick who is no more, and of the 18th Brumaire, which is not yet.

Thereupon the French army is beside itself for joy, and dances, even as the programme said, a flamboyant Pyrrhic around its general. The drum beats the *reveille*, the muskets are decked with bouquets, and everybody shouts for joy. To terminate the festival the bantering drummers sing a patriotic refrain which is drowned in the enthusiasm of the audience, and the curtain falls.

We forgot to mention that there were Hungarian soldiers in white jackets and blue pantaloons, who represented the French army, for the greater historic fidelity.

We regain our gondola and go for a tour on the *Piazza* by the light of the moon.



## CHAPTER XVII

### THE FINE ARTS

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**A**T the entrance to the Grand Canal, alongside the white Church of *La Salute*, and opposite to the red houses of the Campo of San Vital, a point of view illustrated by the masterpiece of Canaletto, rises the Academy of Fine Arts, where by the efforts of the late Count Leopold Cicognara have been brought together a great number of treasures of the Venetian school.

The architecture of the façade is that of Giorgio Massani, and a Minerva seated on a lion, by the sculptor Giacarelli, decorates the attic story. This piece pleases us moderately only. The Minerva is a big girl of robust attractions, in a breastplate, who in no wise resembles the ideal figure coming forth fully armed from the head of Jupiter. Her mount, treated in the silly style of the lions in perukes *à la* Louis XIV, an example of which one sees on the terrace of the Tuileries holding a ball under its paws, has an air somewhat like a poodle dog, in the midst of that crowd of elawed, winged, armed, and nimbused lions, of fierce figure, and of imposing, heraldic bearing, which accompanies Saint Mark on all the edifices of Venice. Possibly this well-meaning lion does not wish to frighten the visitors by a too truculent mien and has made himself benign of aspect designedly.

When one thinks of the Venetian school, three names present themselves irresistibly to the mind: Titian, Paul Veronese, Tintoretto. They seem to have been brought forth suddenly from the azure of the seas under a warm ray of sunlight, like spontaneous flowers. Alongside

of them Jean Bellin and Giorgione range themselves, and that is all.

We are speaking here of the public and of ordinary amateurs who have never seen Italy or made a special study of the paintings of Venice. There is in existence, however, a whole series of almost unknown artists, but admirable ones, who preceded the great names that we have cited, as Aurora goes before the dawn, less brilliant, but more tender, more fresh. These Gothic Venetians join to all the innocent finesse, to all the unction, to all the suavity of Giotto, of Perugino, or of Hemling, an elegance, a beauty, and a richness of color to which the latter never attained. It is a singular thing that the paintings of the colorists have almost all turned black, the harmony of the tints being lost under smoky varnishes; the glazings have taken to themselves wings and flown away, while the works of the draughtsmen, with their timid and circumstantial execution, their absence of imposture, wholly simple local tone, preserve an incomparable splendor and youthfulness. These panels and canvases, anterior often by more than a hundred years to the more celebrated pictures, would seem, were it not for the style which fixes their date, to have been executed yesterday; they still have all the flower of their newness; the centuries have passed by them without leaving any trace. Not a single retouching is necessary. Is this due to the fact that the colors employed were more pure, chemistry not being sufficiently advanced to adulterate them or to invent new ones of an uncertain effect and of a problematical duration? Or have the tones, allowed to remain almost virginal as in engraving, preserved the same value which they had on the palette? This is a question which we cannot decide; but this remark, more noticeable here, may be applied to all schools which preceded that which is called the Renaissance of Art. The more ancient a

painting is, the better it is preserved ; a Van Eyck is fresher than a Van Dyck ; an Andrea Mantegna than a Raphael, and an Antoine de Murano than a Tintoretto. The same difference is also to be noted among the frescos : the more modern are the more decayed. We were prepared in some degree by the pictures distributed throughout the galleries of France, of Spain, of England, of Belgium, and of Holland, for the marvels of Titian, of Paul Veronese, and of Tintoretto. These great men have not deceived us. They have faithfully kept all the promises of their genius, but we expected them to do so ; on the other hand, we have experienced a delightful surprise in beholding the works, little known outside of Venice, of Jean and of Gentil Bellin, of Basaiti, of Marco Roccone, of Mansueti, of Carpaccio, and of others, a list of whom would degenerate into a catalogue. It was altogether a new world ; to find the Venetian *éclat* in Gothic simplicity, the beauty of the South in the somewhat rigid form of the North, Holbeins as finely colored as Giorgiones, Lucas Cranachs as elegant as Raphaels, was rare good fortune, and we have been more sensible of it perhaps than was necessary ; since, in the first glow of enthusiasm, we were not far from looking upon the illustrious masters, the eternal glory of the Venetian school, as corruptors of taste and great men of the Decadence, somewhat similar to the German neo-Christians who shut out Raphael from the Paradise of Catholic painters as too sensual and too pagan.

For several days we have had their names on our lips ; for when one has made a discovery in art one cannot avoid imitating La Fontaine by stopping people on the street and asking them, “ Have you read Baruch ? ”

If we were writing a history of Venetian painting and not a description of travels, we should begin with Nicolas Semitecolo, the earliest of all, who dates back to

1370, and we should descend chronologically to Francesco Zencharelli, the last in point of time, who died in 1790; but the gallery is not so arranged, and this program, which ought to be followed throughout, would not accord with the actual places which the paintings occupy, as they are hung only with regard to their dimensions. We will proceed room by room and the eye can follow our descriptions upon the wall as upon the page.

The Academy of Fine Arts, as is known, occupies the old *Scuola della Carità*. There remains of the primitive decoration a very beautiful ceiling in the first room. This ceiling, divided into sections adorned with cherubim in the act of spreading their wings, has its little legend: A member of the brotherhood took upon himself the task of gilding the room at his own expense, asking as a recompense that his name should be inscribed as donor. This satisfaction was refused him. Brother Cherubin Ottale nevertheless did what he had promised to perform; but he took care to sign his gift by an ingenious ornamental rebus. Ottale, in the language of Venice, signifies "eight wings." A head of a cherub, with a neck-handkerchief of eight wings, therefore represented hieroglyphically the Christian name and the surname of the conceited bourgeois who thus succeeded in making himself known to posterity, a vain-gloriousness easily pardonable, since the ceiling is very rich, of an exquisite taste, and drew from the purse of the brother a great many golden sequins.

This room is the square salon, the gallery of the Academy of Fine Arts; it is the casket in which are arranged, in the most favorable order, the purest diamonds, the Kohinoors, the Grand Moguls, the Regent and the Sancys of that rich Venetian mine, whose veins have furnished so many precious, picturesque jewels.

Each great master of Venice has there a superior

sample of his talent, the masterpiece of his masterpieces, one of those supreme pages in which genius and talent, inspiration and skill are found, in proportion difficult to be met with again; a rare conjunction even in the life of sovereign artists. On that occasion the hand was able to perform what the brain willed it to do, as in that passage of Dante where he says : "*Où l'on peut ce qu'on veut.*"

The "Calling of the Sons of Zebedee to the Apostolate," by Marco Basaiti, approaches closely the German school in the simplicity of its details, the slightly sad softness of tone, and a certain melancholy not habitual with the Italian school. The master of Nuremberg would not disown that landscape, at once fantastic and real, those Gothic castles, with little towers like pepper-boxes, with drawbridges and barbicans on the shore of the Lake of Tiberias, and a fisherman of Chioggia or of the Murazzi would find nothing to criticise in that Peter or in those nets, humbly and faithfully studied; the Christ has unction and suavity, the features of the two future apostles, who are quitting their business of catching fish to become fishers of men, breathe the most lively faith.

We must also stop before the "Saint Francis Receiving the Stigmata," of Francesco Beccarucci de Conegliano. This is a very beautiful thing. The composition is divided into two zones: the upper zone, in which the Saint is seen stretching forth his hand to the Divine imprints, a glorious resemblance to the Saviour, who appreciates his devotion to Him; and the lower zone, peopled with saints and the blessed, the majority being members of the order and appearing to rejoice in the miracle. There are beautiful ascetic heads in it, a profound religious sentiment, and a perfect execution, although it may be a trifle hard. When one regards attentively these Gothic pictures of a cold and restrained



aspect, little by little they become animated, and end by assuming a power of life that is extraordinary ; nevertheless they show neither great anatomical knowledge nor a redundancy of muscles nor of flesh. Their personages have the embarrassed air of timid folk who wish very much to speak to you but do not dare ; their gestures are often awkward, but their expression is so benevolent, so mild and so childishly sincere, that one understands them instantly, and they remain irresistibly fixed in your memory. It is for this reason that, under their awkward manner, they possess one little thing that the masterpieces of cleverness lack — a soul.

We are free to confess that we have a horror of the Bassans, great and small. The everlasting pictures of animals of their manufacture are scattered throughout the whole of Europe, and tiresome paintings of trifling subjects mechanically reproduced, more than warrants this aversion. Still, we must agree that the “Resurrection of Lazarus,” by Leander Bassan, is better than the entering and coming forth from the Ark, the sheepfolds and rustic parks, the hind-quarters of sheep, and the stooping woman in the red petticoat, which are the despair of all the visitors of the gallery.

We note also, the “Marriage of Cana,” by the Paduan,— a grand and beautiful arrangement, wisely executed, a canvas praiseworthy in every respect, and which anywhere else would be considered a masterpiece ; then we come to a peculiar painting by Paris Bordone, whose magnificent portrait of a man clothed in black in the gallery of the Louvre, not far from a man with a red beard and wearing buff gloves, has been admired by every one, and which, after having been attributed to several great masters, seems to have been definitely assigned to Calchar.

This painting, which represents a gondolier delivering the ring of Saint Mark to the Doge, deals with a legend,

an episode of which Giorgione, as we shall see in the following room, has painted in quite a bizarre manner. Here is the story in few words: One night while the gondolier was asleep in his boat, waiting for a job at the landing-place of Saint George Majeur, three mysterious individuals leaped into his gondola and commanded him to conduct them to the Lido; one of the personages, in so far as he could distinguish him through the shadows, had the beard of an apostle and the features of a high dignitary of the Church; the two others revealed themselves, by the rattling of arms under their cloaks, as noblemen. The gondolier turned the prow of his gondola in the direction of the Lido and began to row; but the lagune, which had been tranquil on his departure, began to swell strangely; the waves shone with sinister lights, monstrous apparitions outlined themselves menacingly around the boat, to the great terror of the gondolier; hideous larvæ, devils, part men and part fish, seemed to swim from the Lido toward Venice, causing streams of thousands of sparks to burst forth, arousing a tempest, hissing and whistling around them; but the aspect of the flaming swords of the chevaliers and the outstretched hand of the holy personage caused them to recoil and to vanish in sulphurous explosions.

This battle lasted a long time; new demons continually succeeded the previous ones; nevertheless, the victory rested with the personages in the gondola, who had themselves taken back to the landing-place of the *Piazzetta*. The gondolier did not know what to think of the strange performances; finally, at the moment of separation, the oldest of the three, suddenly causing his nimbus of gold to shine brightly, said to the gondolier, "I am Saint Mark, the Patron of Venice. I learned to-night that the devils, assembled in council at the Lido, in the cemetery of the Jews, had determined to arouse a frightful tempest and overthrow my beloved

city, under the pretext that many dissolute acts are committed there, which give power to evil spirits over its inhabitants; but as Venice is a good Catholic city and will confess its sins in the beautiful Cathedral which they have raised in my honor, I have resolved to defend it against this peril of which they are ignorant, with the aid of these two brave companions, Saint George and Saint Theodore, and for this I borrowed your bark; and since every labor should receive its just compensation, and you have passed through a rough night, here is my ring; take it to the Doge and relate to him what thou hast seen. He will give thee thy cap full of golden sequins."

Having spoken thus, the Saint retook his place upon the top of the portico of Saint Mark's. Saint Theodore clambered up to the top of his column, where was grumbling his ill-natured crocodile, and Saint George went to squat upon the bottom of his niche in the great window of the Ducal Palace.

The gondolier, very much astonished, and with good reason, would have believed that he had been dreaming, after having drunk during the evening too many cups of the wine of Samos, if the big and heavy ring of gold, set with precious stones, which he held in his hand, had not prevented him from doubting the reality of the events of the night.

He went, therefore, to find the Doge, who, with his cocked hat on his head, was presiding over the Senate, and, kneeling respectfully, narrated the story of the battle of the devils with the patrons of Venice. This story at first seemed incredible, but the return of the ring, which was indubitably that of Saint Mark, and the absence of which from the treasury of the Church was established, proved the veracity of the gondolier. This ring, enclosed in a treasure-chest with triple locks, carefully guarded, and the fastenings of which showed no

trace of having been broken open, could not have been taken from it save by supernatural power. The gondolier's cap was filled with gold pieces, and a mass of thanksgiving for the peril escaped was celebrated. This did not hinder the Venetians from continuing their dissolute manner of life, from passing their nights in gambling, drinking, and love-making, of masking themselves for the sake of intrigues or of prolonging for six months in the year the long orgy of their carnival. The Venetians reckon on the protection of Saint Mark to get them into Paradise, and are not otherwise concerned as to their salvation. The affair is the business of Saint Mark; they have raised a sufficiently beautiful church to him and he is still under obligations to them.

The moment chosen by Paris Bordone is that in which the gondolier kneels before the Doge. The composition of the scene is very picturesque: in the perspective is seen a long line of brown or hoary heads of senators of the most magisterial character; onlookers are ranged upon the steps, and form groups skilfully contrasted; the beautiful Venetian costume is displayed in all its splendor. As in almost all the canvases of this school, architecture holds a high place. Beautiful porticos in the style of Palladio, enlivened by personages coming and going, fill the background.

This picture has the merit, quite rare in the Italian school, almost exclusively occupied with the reproduction of religious or mythological subjects, of representing a popular legend, a scene of manners and customs, a romantic subject, moreover, such as Delacroix, or Louis Boulanger might have chosen, and this gives it a character of its own and a peculiar attraction.

It seems to us that a Museum composed of well-executed copies of the masterpieces of all schools would be a very interesting thing and very profitable for art. Many elements of such a gallery ought already to be in

existence. One hall might be consecrated to each great master whose entire work scattered throughout the museums and churches of Europe, might be copied. A choice might be made among the artists of secondary rank, so original, so spiritual, and, if wanting in genius, still so full of talent.

And there might be reunited in this single Palace that which is scattered over the entire earth and which needs, in order that it may be seen, long and costly journeys, often impossible. The Palace of the Fine Arts or the galleries of the Louvre might furnish an asylum for such a collection, which, besides the information it would afford to artists, would have the advantage of prolonging for some centuries the life, or at all events, the memory of masterpieces about to disappear.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE FINE ARTS—*Continued*

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THE pearl of the Museum of Madrid is a Raphael ; that of Venice is a Titian, a marvelous canvas long neglected, then brought to light again, which also has its legend. For many a long year Venice possessed this masterpiece without being aware of it. Relegated to an old, little-frequented church, it had disappeared under gradually increasing layers of dust and behind a network of cobwebs. With difficulty its subject could be vaguely discerned. One day the Count Cicognora, a fine connoisseur, discovered a certain air about those features all smeared with dirt, and scenting the master under that livery of abandonment and wretchedness, moistened with saliva a bit of the canvas and rubbed it with his finger, an action which was not one of exquisite propriety, but one which a lover of pictures cannot refrain from resorting to when he is face to face with a smoky crust, were he twenty times a count and a thousand times a dandy. The noble canvas preserved intact under all this layer of powder, like Pompeii under its mantle of ashes, appeared so young and so fresh, that the Count had no doubt he had recovered a canvas of a great master — an unknown *chef d'œuvre*.

He had the strength of mind to control his emotions and proposed to the custodian to exchange that great dilapidated painting for a fine, wholly new, very fresh, very glossy, finely-framed picture, which would confer honor upon the church and give pleasure to the faithful. The custodian joyfully accepted, smiling to himself at the whimsicality of the Count, who gave new things for old ones, and asked nothing to boot. Its surface, washed

*VENICE*

*The Piazzetta of St. Mark, with a view of the Island of St. George*









of the dirt which soiled it, the *Assunta* of Titian appeared, radiant as the sun bursting through the clouds. Parisian readers can gain an idea of the importance of this discovery by going to the Beaux Arts to see the beautiful copy by Serrur, recently executed and put in place.

The *Assunta* is one of the greatest of Titian's works of art, and the one by means of which he attained his highest fame. The composition is balanced and arranged with an infinite skill. The upper portion, which is arched, represents Paradise, — *Glory*, as the Spaniards call it in their ascetic tongue; hosts of angels, drowned and lost in a flood of incalculable depth, stars scintillating upon the flames, the most vivid sparklings of eternal day, form the aureole of the Father, who arrives from the bottom of the Infinite with the movement of a hovering eagle, accompanied by an archangel and a seraph, whose hands sustain the crown and the nimbus.

This Jehovah, like a divine bird, exhibiting a head and body tapering in horizontal foreshortening under a cloud of flowing draperies spread out like wings, astonishes the beholder by its sublime audacity. If it is possible for a human pencil to give features to divinity, certainly Titian has accomplished the feat.

A power without limits, an imperishable youthfulness radiate from this face with a white beard; since the Olympian Jupiter of Phidias, never has the Lord of Heaven and Earth been more worthily depicted.

The centre of the tableau is occupied by the Virgin Mary, whom a garland of angels and souls of the blessed lifts up, or rather surrounds, for she has no need of helpers in order to mount to Heaven; she raises herself by the outpouring of her invincible faith, by the purity of her soul, more aerial than the most luminous ether. There is, indeed, in this face, an un-

speakable power of ascension, and to obtain this effect Titian has not been obliged to resort to slender forms, clinging draperies, or transparent colors.

His Madonna is a woman very true to life, very much alive, very real, of a beauty as substantial as that of the Venus of Milo, or of *la Femme couchée* of the Judgment Hall at Florence. An ample drapery flutters around her with numerous folds. Nothing could be more celestially beautiful than this great and strong figure in its rose-colored tunic and mantle of azure; in spite of the powerful voluptuousness of the body an expression of the purest virginity sparkles in it.

At the base of the tableau, the Apostles are grouped in various attitudes of rapture and surprise skilfully contrasted. Two or three little angels who connect them with the intermediate zone of the composition, seem to be explaining to them the miracle which is taking place. The heads of the Apostles, of varied ages and characters, are painted with a surprising strength and fidelity to life.

In contemplating this Virgin and comparing the master's idea of her with other Virgins of different masters, we realize what a marvelous and ever new thing art is. What Catholic painting has accomplished in the way of variations upon this theme of the Madonna without exhausting it, astonishes and confounds the imagination; but, upon reflection, one comprehends that, under the type he has chosen, each painter at once introduces his own dream of love, and the personification of his talent.

The Madonna of Albert Dürer, in her dolorous and somewhat constrained grace, with her weary features, more interesting than beautiful, her air of a matron rather than of a virgin, her Teutonic and bourgeois frankness, her tight-fitting vestments with regular folds, almost always accompanied by a rabbit, an owl or a

monkey, through a vague reminiscence of Germanic pantheism, might she not well be the woman whom he had loved and chosen, and does she not very well represent the genius of the artist? As she is his Madonna, she might also easily be his Muse.

The same resemblance is found in Raphael. The type of his Madonna, in which, mingled with former memories, are always to be met with the features of the Fornarina, so often copied, generally idealized, are they not the symbolization of his graceful talent thoroughly imbued with a chaste voluptuousness? The Christian nurtured by Plato and Greek art, the friend of Leo X, the dilettante Pope, the artist who died of love while painting the "Transfiguration," does not his whole being live in those modest Venuses holding a child on their knees? If one wished to symbolize the genius of each painter, in an allegorical tableau, would he portray it otherwise than that of the angel of Urban?

The Virgin of the *Assunta*, great, strong, high-colored, with her healthy and robust charm, her fine bearing, her simple and natural beauty, is she not the painting of Titian, which possesses all his qualities and characteristics? These investigations might be extended, but we have said enough to indicate our meaning.

Thanks to the layers of dust which covered it for so many years, the *Assunta* shines with the splendor of youth; the centuries have not glided by as far as it is concerned, and we have the supreme pleasure of beholding a painting of Titian exactly as it was when it issued from his palette.

Opposite the *Assunta* of Titian, as the painting of most strength and most worthy to face so splendid a masterpiece, has been placed the "Saint Mark Rescuing a Slave," of Tintoretto.

Tintoretto is the king of the strong. He possesses a vehemence of composition, a fury of brush, an audacity

for incredible foreshortenings ; and his Saint Mark may be considered one of the most daring and ferocious of his canvases.

This painting has for its subject the patron saint of Venice coming to the aid of a poor slave whom a barbarous master was tormenting and torturing on account of the obstinate devotion which the poor devil showed toward this saint. The slave is stretched out on the ground upon a cross surrounded by executioners, who are making vain efforts to fasten him to the infamous tree. The nails rebound, the hammers break, the axes fly in fragments ; more merciful than men, the instruments of torture are dulled in the hands of the torturers ; the curious bystanders watch and whisper among themselves, greatly wondering. The judge leans from the top of his judgment seat in order to see why his orders are not executed, while Saint Mark, in one of the most violent foreshortenings which painting has ever risked, thrusts his head from the skies, makes a dive to earth, without clouds, without wings, without cherubim, without any of the aerostatic means ordinarily employed in the pictures of saintship, and comes to deliver him who has had faith in him. This vigorous figure, with the muscles of an athlete, of colossal proportions, rushing through the air like a stone hurled from a catapult, produces the most singular effect. The design is so powerful that the massive Saint sustains himself to the eye and does not fall ; it is very skilful. Add to this that the painting is so brusque in its contrast of light and shadow, so rugged and turbulent of touch, that the fiercest Caravages and Espagnolets placed alongside it would seem to be rose-water, and you will have an idea of this picture which, in spite of its barbarities, preserves always, by means of its accessories, that abundant and sumptuous architectural aspect which is peculiar to the Venetian school.

There are also in this same room an "Adam and Eve," and an "Abel and Cain," by the same painter, two magnificent canvases treated as studies, and possibly the finest which this painter has accomplished from the point of view of execution. Upon a ground of green, suppressed and mysterious, the distant foliage of Eden, or rather the wall of the studio, two superb bodies stand forth, of a white, warm lustre, of a vivid flesh-color and a powerful reality; it is probable that Eve is offering to Adam that fatal apple which stuck in his throat, which is sufficient warrant for two naked personages in the open air; but that makes no difference. Tintoretto, who had written on this wall, "The outline of Michael Angelo and color of Titian," has in this figure accomplished part, at least, of his program.

The painting of "Abel and Cain," which forms a pendant, breathes all the savage fury which could be expected of such a subject and such a painter. Death, the consequences of the sin of our first parents, makes its entry into the young world, by a formidable shadow, in which the assassin and his victim are rolling. In the corner of the canvas, a horrible detail, the head of a killed sheep is bleeding. Is this the sacrifice offered by Abel, or a symbol signifying that innocent animals should also suffer punishment for the curiosity of Eve? We hesitate to say. Tintoretto probably did not think of it. He had other matters to think of than dreaming about subtleties; he, the most courageous wielder of the brush who ever lived.

Bonifazio, of whose work our Museum possesses only one insufficient example, is an admirable artist. His *Mauvais Riche*, of the Academy of Fine Arts, very intelligently copied by M. Serrur, to whom also is due the fine fac-simile of the *Assunta*, is a picture that is profoundly Venetian. There is wanting in it neither beautiful women with plaited tresses, strings of pearls, robes

of velvet and brocade, nor grand seigneurs of gallant and courtly bearing, nor musicians, nor pages, nor negroes, nor cloth of damask richly covered with gold and silver plate, nor of dogs frisking on the mosaic pavements, and on this occasion sniffing at the rags of Lazarus with the disgust of well-bred dogs, nor terraces with railings on which wine in antique cups is served, nor white colonnades between which can be seen the blue sky. Only the silver-gray of Paul Veronese here assumes an amber tint, the silver gilds itself and becomes vermilion. Bonifazio, who painted portraits, has given to his heads a something more intimate than did the author of the four great banquets and the ceiling of the Ducal Palace, accustomed as he was, to regarding objects from the point of view of decoration. The physiognomies of Bonifazio, studied and individually characteristic, faithfully recall to mind the patrician types of Venice, who so often posed before the artist. The anachronism of the costume shows that Lazarus is only a pretext, and that the real subject of the painting is a banquet of noblemen with courtesans, their mistresses, at the base of one of those beautiful palaces which bathe their feet of marble in the green water of the Grand Canal.

Do not pass too quickly before these Apostles, of so fine a tounure, so rich a color, and of a religious solemnity which the Venetian school does not always possess, especially after the middle of the sixteenth century, when the pagan ideas of the Renaissance were introduced into art. The Academy of Fine Arts possesses a large number of the works of Bonifazio.

This single room, besides the *Mauvais Riche* and the Apostles, of which we have just spoken, contains an "Adoration of the Magi," a "Christ, and the Woman taken in Adultery," a "Saint Jerome" and "Saint Catherine," "Saint Mark," Jesus on His throne surrounded by holy personages, canvases of the greatest



worth and which valiantly hold their own in the vicinity of Titian, of Tintoretto, and Paul Veronese.

A great painter, little known in France, is Rocco Marcone, an artist of a pure style and of profound feeling, a species of Italian Albert Dürer, less fantastic and less chimerical than the German, but having a species of Archaic tranquillity in his manner which makes him seem more ancient than his contemporaries, like an Ingres among a group composed of Delacroix, Descamps, Couture, Muller and Diaz. His "Christ Between Saint John and Saint Paul" recalls an analogous subject by the painter of the ceiling of Homer, which in former times was in the Church *de la Trinite-du-Mont* at Rome, and which may now be seen in the gallery of the Luxembourg. The heads have much character and nobility, and the group, vigorously colored, stands out upon a little sky flecked with sheep-like clouds.

We spoke a moment ago, in connection with Rocco Marcone, of Albert Dürer, and Ingres; a third point of resemblance, still more exact, comes into our memory,—that of the Spanish painter Juan de Juanes, in his admirable *Vie de Saint Etienne*; there is the same purity, the same tranquil and sober coloring.

Here, on one side of a wall, are a whole band of those Gothic Venetians, whom we mentioned upon entering the Academy of Fine Arts, so suave, so pure, so ingenuous, so mild, and so charming.

Jean Bellin, Cima da Conegliano, and Vittore Carpaccio, all three present themselves to us with the same subject, a subject which sufficed for the whole of the Middle Ages, and caused the production of thousands of masterpieces; the Madonna and Child on a throne surrounded by Saints, ordinarily the patrons of the person for whom the picture was painted, a custom against the anachronism of which the pedants cried out, asserting that it was not natural that Saint Francis of Assisi,

Saint Sebastian and Saint Catherine or other saints should be found in the same frame with the Holy Virgin, mingling the costumes of the Middle Ages with antique draperies.

These critics did not understand that, for a lively faith, neither time nor place exists and that there is nothing more touching than this reconciliation of the idolatrous with the devout,—a real reconciliation, for the Madonna was then a living being, contemporaneous, actual; she took part in the existence of every one; she served as an ideal for all timid lovers and as a mother for all the afflicted. She was not relegated to the furthestmost background of the skies, as is done in the ages of incredulity, under the pretext of respect; one lived familiarly with her, one confided to her one's troubles, one's hopes, and no one would have been surprised to see her appear in the street in the company of a monk, of a cardinal, of a religious devotee, or any other holy personage. With the very strongest reason there was admitted without difficulty into a picture, that mixture which shocks the purist, but which is profoundly Catholic.

For our part, we dearly love these thrones and these baldaquins of a precious and delicate ornamentation, these Madonnas holding their Son on their knees and naïvely adorned with a nimbus of gold, as if color was not sufficiently brilliant for them, with these little angels playing on viols of love, rebecks, and angelicas.

Yes, in spite of our liking for pagan art, we love these innocent Gothic pictures, these Fathers of the Church carrying great missals under their arms, the cardinals, with biretta on their heads, these Saint Georges in the armor of knights, these chastely nude Saint Sebastians, a species of Christian Apollo, who, instead of hurling arrows, receive them; these priests, these saints, and these monks in their beautiful flowered dalmatics, their frocks of white and black; these young women saints

fastened upon a wheel and holding a palm branch in their hands, ladies of honor to the Queen of Heaven; all that loving and devoted company who group themselves humbly at the base of the Apotheosis of the Virgin Mother. We find that this arrangement, which is, in a way, hierarchical, better satisfies the exigencies of the Church picture, as it should be conceived, than the learned and conceited compositions arranged from the point of view of reality. There is in this composition a sacred rhythm which ought to catch the eye of the faithful.

The appearance of an image, so necessary to our sense in devotional subjects, is preserved, and at the same time art loses nothing by it; while, limited on one side, individuality regains its rights on the other. Each artist stamps his originality upon the execution, and these paintings, made of the same elements, are perhaps the more personal.

The feathered musicians of Carpaccio do not resemble those of Jean Bellin, although they tune their guitars at the feet of the Virgin upon the steps of a baldacchino almost like his.

The winged virtuosos of Carpaccio are more elegant, of a more youthful charm, they have the appearance of pages of good family; those of Jean Bellin are more innocent, more infantile, more puppet-like; they play their music like country choir-boys under the eye of their vicar. They are all charming, but of a varied grace, the imprint of the character of the painting.



## CHAPTER XIX

### THE FINE ARTS — *Concluded.*

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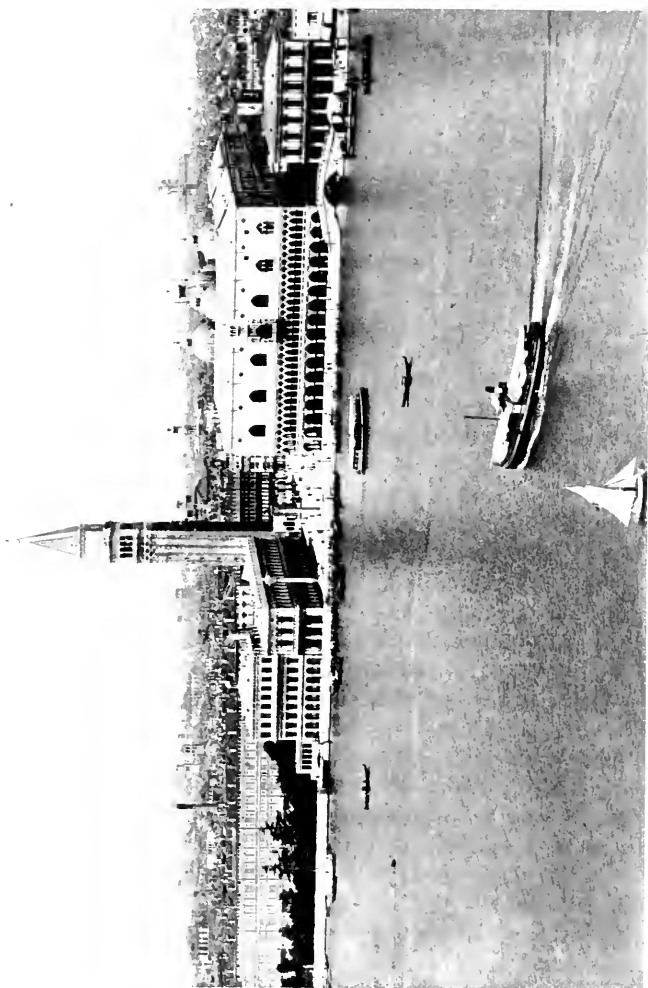
“**T**HE Holy Family,” of Paul Veronese, is composed in the gorgeous and luxurious style familiar to that painter. It is certain that lovers of the exact truth will not there find the humble interior of the poor carpenter. This column in rose-colored brocatelle of Verona, that gorgeously flowered curtain, the rich folds of which form the background of the picture, announce a princely habitation; but the Holy Family is much rather an apotheosis than the exact representation of the poor home of Joseph. The presence of a French saint bearing a palm, of a priest in cardinal’s robes, of a holy woman on whose neck is rolled, like a horn of Ammon, a shining plait of golden hair in the Venetian fashion, the quasi-royal stage upon which the Divine Mother is enthroned, presenting her Bambino for adoration, superabundantly prove it.

In the second room is displayed, upon an immense canvas, the *Repas chez Lévi*, one of the four great feasts of Paul Veronese. Our Museum possesses two of them: the “Marriage of Cana,” and the “Supper with the Magdalen,” of the same dimensions as the “Repast,” of Venice. There is the same co-ordination, ample, rich, and facile; the same silvery lustre, the same air of feasting and of joy. There are always swarthy men in their rich dalmatics of damask or brocade, blonde women glittering with pearls, negro slaves carrying plates and ewers, children playing on the steps of the railed stairways, with great white hounds, marble columns and statues, soft, beautiful sky of a turquoise blue, which, when stepping back, is seen framed in the door-

**VENICE**

*View from the Island of St. George*









way of the neighboring room, causing an illusion like a view in a diorama. Paul Veronese, without even excepting Titian, Rubens, and Rembrandt, is probably the greatest colorist who ever lived. He is neither yellow like Titian, nor red like Rubens, nor bituminous like Rembrandt. He paints in the clear, with an astonishing precision of locality. No one knows better than he the harmony of tones and their relative value; he knows it better than M. Chevreul, and obtains, by juxtaposition, shades of an exquisite freshness, which, separate, would seem gray and earthy.

The composition of the "Annunciation," by the same painter, is a singular one. The Virgin Mary kneeling in the corner of a long transverse canvas whose central space is occupied by an elegant piece of architecture, awaits with a modest air the arrival of the angel relegated to the other end of the picture, and who with spread wings seems to glide toward her to give her the angelic salutation. This arrangement, contrary to the law which places at the centre of the canvas the group upon which it is desired to fasten the eyes, is a brilliant caprice, which would not have been so successful, executed by any other than Paul Veronese.

The Venetians gaining a victory over the Turks, thanks to the intervention of Saint Justine, is one of those subjects which are pleasing to the national *amour-propre*, and which are repeatedly met with. We have already described a similar composition in the Ducal Palace; this mixture of armor and of costumes, of caps and turbans, of Christians and infidels, was a happy theme for the artist, and he has made skilful use of it. We cannot describe in detail all the paintings of Paul Veronese contained in the Academy of Fine Arts. A separate volume would be necessary; for all these great geniuses were of a prodigious fecundity.

The Fine Arts contains the last picture of Titian,

a priceless treasure! The years, so heavy upon us, glided by without oppressing this patriarch of painting, who traversed a whole century and whom the plague surprised at his work at the age of ninety-nine years.

This painting, solemn and melancholy of aspect, the funereal subject of which seems as though it were a presentiment, represents a Christ taken down from the cross; the sky is sombre, a wan day lights the cadaver piously held by Joseph of Arimathea and Saint Mary Magdalena. Both are sad, sombre, and seem, by their dejected attitude, to despair of the resurrection of their Master. It is evident that they are asking themselves, with a secret anxiety, whether this body anointed with balms, which they are about to lay in the sepulchre, will ever come forth from it; in fact, Titian never painted a corpse so death-like.

Under this green skin and in those bluish veins, there is not one drop of blood, the purple of life has been drawn off from it forever. The Christ on the Mount of Olives, of Saint Paul; the *Pietà*, of Saint-Denis—of the Holy Sacrament, by Eugene Delacroix, alone can give an idea of this sinister and dolorous painting, in which, for the first time, the great Venetian has been abandoned by his old and unalterable serenity. The shadow of approaching death seems to struggle with the light of the painter who always had the sun on his palette, and envelops the picture with a cold twilight. The hand of the artist was stiff before his task was accomplished, as is testified by the inscription in black letters traced in the corner of the canvas: “*Quod Tizianus inchoatum reliquit Palma reverenter absolvit Dioque dicavit opus.*” — “The work which Titian left uncompleted, Palma respectfully completes and offers to God.” This noble, touching, and pious inscription made of this picture a monument.

Certainly, Palma, a great painter himself, could not have approached the work of the master without trembling, and his brush, skilful though it was, doubtless hesitated and shook more than once in placing itself upon the strokes made by Titian.

If in the Fine Arts is to be found the *omega* of the picturesque life of Titian, the *alpha* may be found there also under the form of a great picture, the subject of which is the "Presentation of Mary in the Temple." This canvas was painted by Titian when he was still almost a child; tradition says at fourteen years of age, which seems to us to evince too great precocity in view of the beauty of the work. But coming down to actual facts, the "Presentation of Mary" really does date back to the extreme youth of the painter. The tremendous interval of time covered by his work can therefore be estimated. All the qualities of an artist are found in the germ in this juvenile work. They develop themselves more abundantly later on, but still they exist in it already in a visible fashion.

The pomp of the architecture, the magnificent figures of the old men, the spirited folding of the draperies, the virile simplicity of the style, all reveal the master in the child. The clear and luminous coloring, which the high-ascended sun of vigorous age will gild with a warmer reflection, has already that museuline solidity, that robust consistency, which are distinguishing characteristics of the author of "Sacred Love and Profane Love" of the Borghese Palace; of the *Femme Couchée* of the Tribune of Florence, and of the "Mistress of Alphonso d'Avalon, Marquis of Guest," of the Museum of the Louvre.

Titian is, in our opinion, the only altogether robust artist who has made his appearance since the days of antiquity. He has the strong and powerful serenity of Phidias. With him there is nothing feverish, nothing

troubled, nothing of unrest. The modern malady has not touched him. He is fine, vigorous, and tranquil as a pagan artist of the best days. His lofty nature expands at ease in a warm azure, under a hot sun, and his coloring makes one think of those beautiful old marbles gilded by the fair light of Greece. There is no groping, no effort, no violence. He attains the ideal at the first stroke without dreaming over it. A calm and vivacious joy lights up his immense work. He alone seems to have no suspicion of death, except in his last picture. Without sensual ardor, without voluptuous intoxication, he displays before the gaze, in purple and in gold, the beauty, the youth, all the amorous poesy of the feminine body, with the impassiveness of God showing Adam the entirely naked Eve. He sanctifies nudity by that expression of supreme repose, of beauty forever fixed, of the realized Absolute, which makes chaste the freest of the antique works.

In speaking of the fisherman taking the ring of Saint Mark to the Doge, we narrated the story which is attached to it. Giorgione has dealt with another episode of that wonderful tale: it is the combat of Saint George and Saint Theodore with the demons. Although we have some admiration for the warm, vivacious and highly-colored *concert champêtre* of Giorgione, we admit that we do not much like this picture in the Fine Arts of Venice. Those athletic, reddish demons, gamboling in the midst of the green water, that mingling of the forms of men and fish welded together without any mystery, do not answer in any way to the chimerical idea one forms for himself of a similar combat. The clear sky of Venetian art has not enough mist about it for the monstrous imaginations of legendary dreams to swarm in it with ease. Daylight makes uncomfortable these outlandish creatures, and these formless larvæ who need, in order to hide themselves, the shade of Faust's cauldron, the spiral staircase of Rembrandt, or the cavern of the

Temptations of Teniers. A Venetian painter of the sixteenth century is fantastic, but not fanciful.

The "Descent from the Cross," of Rocco Marcone, has all the serious qualities, all the unction of the Gothic paintings and their tranquil symmetry, with a richness of tone and a flower of coloring which are not diminished by dangerous neighbors. The dead Christ, recalling by His bloodless flesh the dull pallor of the sacrificial Host, slips down softly upon the bosom of the Virgin, upheld by a Magdalene of a tender and delicate beauty, whose great masses of long hair fall like cascades of gold upon magnificent robes of flowered damask of a rich purple and sombre as rubies. Was this robe steeped in the blood of the Saviour, O Magdalene! or in the drops falling from thy heart?

The Paduan has a "Virgin in Glory" in the Spanish style. The Holy Spirit descends in a flood of light. A warm gilded mist fills this canvas, which calls to mind the apotheoses or rather the ascensions of Murillo.

We did not marvel greatly, in spite of the great talent displayed in it, at the vast apocalyptic canvas of Palma the younger, the "Triumph of Death." Saint John, seated on a rock on Patmos, gazes, with quill raised and ready to write, upon the formidable vision which defiles before him: Justice and War riding upon sombre coursers, and Death, mounted upon his great pale horse, reaping in the human harvest, ears which fall down in sheaves of corpses on either side of the road.

With the exception of Tintoretto, who by means of his swarthy coloring and strength of brush can attain to tragedy and terror, these lugubrious subjects are, in general, very poorly adapted to the Venetian painters, happy natures to whom come readily the azure of the sky and of the sea, the whiteness of marble and flesh, the gold of the hair and of brocades; they cannot remain serious long, and, behind the frightful mask with which

they strive to hide their vermilion cheeks, one hears their painting give a smothered laugh.

A very curious picture by Gentil Bellin is the procession on the Place Saint Mark of the relics preserved in the monastery of Saint John at the moment when Jacob Salis made his vow to the cross. A more complete collection of the costumes of the period could not be imagined; the patient and minute execution of the artist does not permit the loss of any detail. Nothing is sacrificed, all is rendered with Gothic conscientiousness. Each head must be a portrait, and a portrait as true to life as a daguerreotype—plus the coloring.

The appearance of the Place Saint Mark as it was then has the exactitude of an architectural plan. The old Byzantine mosaics, repaired later, still adorn the portals of the old Basilica and—a remarkable peculiarity—the bell-turrets are entirely gilded, which has never been done in reality.

But a painter like Gentil Bellin had not conceived this fantasy under his cap. These bell-turrets were, in fact, to have been gilded, but the Doge Loredano needed for a war the sequins intended for the gilding, and the project was not carried out; the only trace of the proposed plan which remains is in the picture of Gentil Bellin, who had gilded his Saint Mark in anticipation.

A certain miracle of a cross which fell into the water from the top of a bridge of Venice,—the bridge of Saint Leon or of Saint Laurence, we do not know which,—occupied much of the time of the painters of this period. The Fine Arts contain no less than three important pictures upon this odd subject: one by Lazzaro Sebastiani, one by Gentil Bellin, another by Giovanni Mansueti. These canvases are of the greatest interest; they deviate from the habitual type of Italian painting, which revolves in a narrow circle of subjects of devotion or mythology, and rarely concerns itself with the familiar

details of real life. The monks, in all kinds of robes, the patricians, the people throwing themselves into the water, swimming and plunging, trying to recover the holy crucifix fallen to the bottom of the Canal, present the oddest physiognomies. Upon the banks the crowd remains at prayer, awaiting the result of the search. There is especially a row of kneeling ladies, with joined hands, covered with pearls and gems, in short-waisted gowns, like those worn under the Empire, who present a succession of profiles standing out one above another with a Gothic good humor, a shrewdness, a beauty, a delicacy, and a variety that is extraordinary; it is strange and charming.

One sees in these canvases the ancient houses of Venice with their red walls, their windows with Lombard trefoils, their terraces surmounted by stakes, the old bridges suspended by chains, and the gondolas of other days which have not their present form. There was no *felce*, but a cloth stretched upon hoops, like the galiots of Saint Cloud; nor do they carry that species of violin-neck of polished iron which serves as a counter-weight to the rower located at the poop; they are also much less slender.

Nothing is more elegant, more childishly graceful than the succession of paintings in which Vittore Carpaccio has represented the life of Saint Ursula. This Carpaccio has the ideal charm, the adolescent slenderness of Raphael in the "Marriage of the Virgin," one of the first and perhaps the most charming of his pictures; heads more innocently adorable or figures of more angelic coquetry could not be imagined. There is, especially, a young man with long hair, seen from the back, letting fall upon his shoulders his velvet-collared cape, who is of a beauty so spirited, so youthful and so seductive, that one might believe he was looking upon the Faun of Praxiteles clothed in a costume of the Middle Ages.

We are surprised that the name of Carpaccio is not more generally known; he has all the adolescent purity, all the graceful seductiveness of the painter of Urban in his early style, and in addition that admirable Venetian coloring which no other school has been able to attain.

The Pinacoteca Contarini, legacy of that patrician art lover who gave to the Museum his gallery, with armor, statuary, vases, sculptures, and other precious objects, contains choice bits of the Venetian and other schools. We will mention the "Pilgrims of Emmaus," by Marco Marziale, a canvas treated with a circumstantial plainness, almost Germanic, in which may be remarked an odd-looking negro draped in a striped cloak of vivid colors; the "Madonna," the "Infant Jesus," "Saint John," "Saint Catherine," by Andrea Cordegliaghi, whose blonde heads stand out on a green background of landscape visible through a window; a "Marriage of Saint Catharine," in which Saint Peter and Saint John assist as witnesses, by Boccacino Cremonense; the saintly fiancée, with hair of that reddish gold so dear to the old masters, and her beautiful embroidered robe shining brightly in the midst of a landscape of mountains, and sea of azure mildness; the "Madonna col Bambino," by Francesco Bissolo, very soft, very pretty, very fresh, of a certain charming delicacy of style, etc., etc.

The "Fortune Triptyque," by Jean Bellin, is distinguished by singular allegorical inventions. In the middle panel, a nude woman stands upright upon an altar, accompanied by angels or cupids playing upon tambourines. A young man, also nude, with a crown upon his head, a cloak upon his shoulder, offers gifts to a warrior who is fleeing; a woman holding a ball, her hair knotted in the form of a cap, is wafted upon a ship, while little Cupids play in the waves like Tritons.

The etchings of Callot please us more than his paintings of a more or less doubtful authenticity. There is at



the Pinacothèque Contarini, a "Champ de Foire" by the engraver of Nancy, swarming with Bohemians, charlatans, beggars, lansquenets, — flying, playing tricks, begging, drinking, playing with cards or with dice.

Let us finish with the gem, the pearl, the star of this Museum: a "Madonna with the Infant Jesus," by Jean Bellin. This is a well-worn, hackneyed subject, treated a thousand times, but which blooms forth anew with eternal youth under the pencil of the old master. What is the reason? A woman holding a child on her knees, but what a woman! That head pursues you like a dream, and he who has seen it once, sees it always; it is of an impossible beauty and yet of a strange verisimilitude, of an immaculate virginity and of a penetrating voluptuousness; a supreme disdain in an infinite meekness. We seemed, before this canvas, to be contemplating the being of our unrealizable dream, surprised in our soul by the artist. Every day we went to spend an hour in mute adoration at the feet of that celestial idol, and we should never have been able to depart from Venice, if a young French painter, taking pity on us, had not made for us a copy of that head which had become so dear to us.



## CHAPTER XX

### THE STREETS—THE EMPEROR'S BIRTHDAY

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THE streets of Venice are rarely mentioned. They exist, however, and there are many of them, but the canals and gondolas absorb the descriptions on account of their strangeness. The absence of horses and carriages gives to the Venetian streets a peculiar appearance. Their narrowness makes them resemble those of Oriental cities. As the ground of the isles is limited, and the houses in general very high, the slender gashes which separate them have the appearance of cuttings made by saws in enormous blocks of stone. Certain *calles* of Grenada, certain *alleys* in London, convey a sufficiently correct idea of them.

The Frezzaria is one of the most animated streets of the city; it is six or eight feet wide. It represents the Rue de la Paix in Paris, the width excepted. It is chiefly in this street that the goldsmiths are to be found, who make those almost imperceptible little chains of gold, thin as hairs, which are called *jaseron*, and which are one of the characteristic curiosities of Venice. With the exception of these chains and some coarse silver jewelry for the use of the country folk, and which an artist finds picturesque, there is nothing remarkable to be found in these shops. Those of the fruiterers offer the most attractive displays; nothing is fresher, better arranged, more appetizing than those piles of vermilion peaches ranged like cannon-balls in the artillery parks, than those masses of golden grapes, amber, transparent, of the richest colors, glowing like precious stones, and

whose seeds, strung into necklaces and bracelets, would have admirably set off the neck and arms of some antique Ménade.

The tomatoes mingle their red with lighter tints, and the melon, its green exterior gashed with a knife, exhibits its rosy wound. All these fine fruits, vividly illumined by the gas, are wonderfully tempting upon their beds of green vine-leaves.

The eye could not be more agreeably regaled; and often, without feeling in the least hungry, we have bought peaches and grapes for sheer love of their coloring. We remember, also, certain fish-stands covered with little fish, so white, so silvery, so pearly, that we would have liked to swallow them raw, after the manner of the ichthyophagi of the South Seas, for fear of spoiling their delicate tints; and this enabled us to comprehend that barbarity practised at ancient banquets, which consisted in watching the sea-eels die in crystal vases in order to enjoy the opaline tints with which their dying agonies variegated them.

In the evening the streets afford an extremely animated and brilliant spectacle. The shops are illuminated with gas, and the streets, being so very narrow, the light is not dissipated. The stands where pastry and fried food are sold, the wine-shops, the very numerous cafés, flare and swarm with customers. There is a perpetual coming and going. Each shop, without exception, has its miniature chapel, adorned with a Madonna before which lamps or candles are kept burning, and pots of real or artificial flowers are placed. It is sometimes a statuette of colored plaster, sometimes a smoky painting; sometimes a Greek image with a base of Byzantine gold, or even a simple modern engraving. This Madonna replaces in devout Italy the ancient household gods.

This cult of the Virgin, a touching, a poetic cult, has

very few opponents in Venice, if it has any, and Voltaireans, in this connection, would be little pleased with the "progress of light" in the ancient City of the Doges.

At almost every street corner, at almost every descent from a bridge, there is presented to view, behind a grating or glass case, a Madonna upon an altar, bedecked with crowns made of the pith of reeds, collarettes of glass beads, paper flowers, robes of silver lace, and all those pious tinsel ornaments with which the simple Southern faith loads the object of its adoration with childish coquetry. Tapers and lamps keep perpetually lighted these altars loaded with such votive offerings as silver hearts, limbs of wax, women's breasts, pictures of ships wrecked by thunderbolts, burned houses and other catastrophes apropos of which the Virgin miraculously intervened. About these chapels are always to be found old women at prayer, some young girl on her knees, some sailor who is making a vow or performing one, and sometimes also, persons whose appearance indicates that they belong to a class which, with us, has not that simplicity of faith, and which leaves the religion of Christ to the common people and to domestics. We also found, contrary to the generally accepted opinion, that Italy is more devout than Spain.

One of these chapels, near the Bridge de la Paille, on the Quay of the Slaves, has always numbers of the faithful within it, either because it is situated upon a much frequented street, or because it possesses some privilege or immunity of which we are ignorant. There are also scattered about in several places money-boxes for the benefit of the souls in Purgatory. The few pieces of gold or silver thrown into them are used to buy masses for the poor forgotten dead.

After the Frezzaria, the street which leads from the Campo San Mose to the Place de Santa-Maria-Zobenigo,

is one of those which affords the stranger the greatest number of subjects for observation; many lanes empty themselves there as into an artery, since it puts the banks of the Grand Canal in communication with the Place Saint Mark; the shops remain open there longer than elsewhere, and as it is a little less narrow, the strangers pass through it without fear of losing themselves, which is a very easy matter in Venice, where the direction of the streets, complicated by canals and blind alleys, is so intricate, that it has been found necessary to mark by a row of stones accompanied at intervals by arrows indicating the direction, the route from the *Piazza* to the railway station, located at the other end of the city, near the Church of the Scalzi.

How many times have we given the night the amusement of leading us astray in this Dedalus, inextricable for any one but a Venetian! After having followed twenty streets, traversed thirty lanes, passed by ten canals, ascended and descended the same number of bridges, it has often happened that we have found ourselves once more at the place from which we set out.

These chases, for which we chose moonlight nights, enabled us to surprise Venice in its secret attitudes from a host of unexpected and picturesque points of view.

Often it was a great palace half in ruins, outlined in the shadow by a silvery ray, causing to shine suddenly like scales or mirrors the window panes still remaining in its broken windows; sometimes it was a bridge tracing its black arch on a perspective of bluish water slightly foggy; further on a trail of red fire falling from a lighted house upon the sombre oil of a sleeping canal; at other times it was a deserted campo in which a church was oddly outlined, peopled with statues, which in the obscurity assumed the appearance of spectres; or a tavern in which gondoliers and rapsallions, gesticulating like demons, were projected against the window-panes

like Chinese puppets; or, again, a water-gate half open, through which mysterious figures were passing in a gondola.

On one occasion we actually found our way into a really sinister lane, back of the Grand Canal. Originally coated with that shade of red which was the usual color of the old Venetian buildings, its lofty houses had a ferocious and threatening aspect. The rain, the fog, the desolation, and absence of light at the bottom of that narrow cut had little by little taken the color out of the façades; but a faint reddish tint still dyed the walls and looked like blood badly washed away after a crime. Ennui, cold, terror, oozed from those sanguinary walls; a heavy odor of saltpetre and stagnant water, a musty smell, reminding one of the prison, the cloister, and the cavern, took you by the nose. At the closed windows was no ray of light, no appearance of life. The low door studded with rusty nails and furnished with knockers of iron corroded by the weather, seemed never to open; nettles and weeds encroached upon the thresholds and did not seem to have been mowed by human hands for ages. An emaciated black dog, who suddenly leaped forth from the shadow like a Jack-in-a-box, upon seeing us, began to give utterance to furious and plaintive yelps, as though unaccustomed to the appearance of man. He followed us for some time, jumping about us in the manner of the spaniel in the promenade of Faust and Wagner. But fixing our eyes upon him we said "Unclean beast, thou yelpst in vain; thou shalt never swallow our *monad*." This speech seemed to astonish him, and seeing himself discovered, he disappeared, uttering a mournful howl. Was it a dog or was it an evil spirit? That is a question which we prefer to leave unanswered.

We very much regret our lack of Hoffman's talent to make this sinister street the theatre of one of those weird

and fearsome tales, like "The Man in Black," "The Deserted House," the "Night of Saint Sylvester," in which some alchemists get into a dispute over the body of a mannikin and fight with microscopes in a whirlwind of monstrous visions. The bald, wrinkled, grimacing heads, decomposed by a perpetual metamorphosis, of Master Tabracchio, of Spallanзи, of Leuwenhoek, of Swammerdam, of Counsellor Tusman, and of Lindhorst the archivist, might be wonderfully well framed in these black windows.

If Gozzi, the author of the *Contratempti*, who believed himself exposed to the rancor of enchanters and familiar spirits whose manœuvres he had discovered and whose secrets he had betrayed in his fairy plays, had ever traversed this solitary lane he would have experienced some of those inconceivable mishaps which seem to have been reserved for the poet of Turandot, of "The Love of the Three Orangemen" and of the "Blue Monster." But Gozzi, who had the sentiment of the invisible world, must have always avoided the street of the Avocats at the twilight hour.

In returning from one of these fantastic tours, during which the city seemed more deserted than usual, we went to bed in a melancholy frame of mind after having waged a terrible combat against a monstrous mosquito, buzzing like a wasp, shaking his plumes like a drum-major, unrolling his proboscis like the god Ganesa, grating his saw with the most ferocious audacity, in which we were worsted, and from which we issued riddled with envenomed wounds.

We were beginning to plunge ourselves into that dark ocean of sleep, so like that of death, of which the ancients deemed it the brother, when through the heaviness of our torpor, we heard loud whispering, rumblings of far-off thunder, and mutterings of awe-inspiring voices. Was it a tempest, a battle, a cataclysm of nature, a struggle of

demons with souls? Such was the question put to our half-awakened intelligence.

Presently a deafening noise tore away the dark veil of our sleep, like a flash of lightning which cleaves a black cloud. Cymbals clashed their brassy discs and resounded like the clash of armor; tomtoms and gongs vibrated under furious percussions; the big drum roared like the *mêlée* of a hundred bulls; the ophycleids and trombones unloosed metallic hurricanes; the cornets whined despairingly; the little flute made desperate efforts to rise above this noise and dominate it; all the instruments struggled in a hubbub and clatter. It might be called a festival of Hector Berlioz floating adrift at night on the water.

When this musical water-spout passed beneath our balcony, at times we imagined we heard the clarions of Jericho sounding, and the trumpets of the Last Judgment; a tempest of bells formed the accompaniment.

This tumult moved toward the Grand Canal by the red light of many torches. We thought the serenade a trifle furious, and we pitied with all our heart the belle for whom this nocturnal uproar, this colossal charivari, was intended. "The lover is scarcely prudent," thought we, "and is not afraid of compromising her beauty. A guitar, a violin, or a lute would have sufficed, it seems to us." Then the noise dying away in the distance, we began to go to sleep again, when a blinding white light penetrated our closed eyelids, like one of those dazzling flashes of lightning for which the most opaque nights have no shade, and a deafening detonation, which made the window-panes dance and the house shake from top to bottom, burst forth from the midst of the silence. We jumped three feet from our bed; had lightning struck in the middle of the room? Was the siege of Venice recommencing without warning, and had a bomb burst in our room in the midst of our sleep?

These deafening explosions were repeated every fifteen



minutes until morning, to the great damage of the glass and our nerves. They seemed to originate at a point very near by, and each time a dazzling flash announced them to us; between the discharges there was profound silence, the silence of death. In the midst of this tumult Venice seemed to be engulfed and drowned in the lagunes. All the windows were dark; not a flash from a gondola shone through the pale dimness.

In the morning the solution of the enigma was revealed. It was the birthday of the Emperor of Austria. All this bacchanalia was taking place in honor of the German Cæsar. The batteries of the *Giudecca* and Saint George boomed out their salutes, and many panes of glass were broken in the neighborhood. With daylight, the uproar began again. The frigates fired their guns, alternating with the batteries; the bells pealed from the thousand bell-turrets of the city; the rattle of musketry was heard at regular intervals. The burnt powder, rising from all quarters in great clouds, was the incense intended to delight the nose of the master, if from the summit of his throne in Vienna he might turn his head in the direction of the Adriatic.

It seems to us that in this homage to the Emperor there was a certain ostentation of artillery, a certain luxuriousness of fusillades with a double motive. This compliment of a festival of cannonading had two purposes, and it was not difficult to understand them.

We made the rounds of the *Piazza*. A *Te Deum* was chanted in the Cathedral. The garrison, in full dress, was formed into a square on the Place, kneeling and rising at a signal from the officers, in the proper places in the course of the divine office. A brilliant staff officer, all bedecked with gilding and decorations, occupied the central position and scintillated proudly in the sunlight; then at certain times the muskets were raised all together, and the heavy fire from the guns made white

whirlwinds of frightened pigeons fly about in the blue sky. The poor pigeons of Saint Mark, dazed by that tumult, and believing that in contempt of their immunity a great slaughter of them was about to take place, knew not where to hide themselves; they knocked against each other in the air, wild with terror, beat themselves against the cornices and fled swiftly over domes and chimneys; then, silence being again restored, they returned to peck familiarly in their accustomed places, even at the feet of the soldiers, so great is the force of habit.

All this took place in the midst of the most complete solitude. The *Piazza*, always so full of life, was deserted. Only a few foreigners glided about in small groups under the Procuraties. The infrequent spectators who were not foreigners, betrayed by their blonde locks, their square features, their Teutonic descent. No woman's face appeared at the windows, and yet the sight of fine uniforms worn by handsome officers is appreciated in every country in the world by the more lovely half of the human race. Venice, suddenly depopulated, resembled those Oriental cities of Arabian tales ravaged by the wrath of a magician.

This uproar in this silence, this bustle in this emptiness, this immense display of force in this loneliness, had about it something strange, painful, alarming, supernatural. This people feigning death while their oppressors were exulting with joy, this city which was suppressing itself in order not to assist in this triumph, made a profound and peculiar impression upon us. Non-existence raised to a state of manifestation, speechlessness changed into menace, absence having the signification of revolt, are resources of despair to which despotism drives slavery. Assuredly a universal hue, a general cry of malediction against the Emperor of Austria could not have been more energetic.

The discharges of artillery continued all day, and the regiments performed evolutions on the *Piazza* and the *Piazzetta* with scarcely any spectators except themselves. Wearied of this monotonous diversion we went for our favorite walk along the bank of the Schiavoni, where a few Greeks and Armenians were sauntering. There we had our tympanum cracked again by the cannon of the warship anchored in the port. A poor little dog, tied by a cord fastened to the mast of a barge belonging to Zante or Corfu, at each detonation leaped into the air crazy with fear and ran around in a circle as far as the cord permitted, protesting with all his might against this stupid noise, as though he had been wounded by the sound. We were of the same opinion as the dog, and as we were not tied by a string, we ran away to Quintavalle, where we dined under the arbor of Ser Zuane, at a bearable distance from that odious military din.

In the evening there was not a soul at the Café Florian! Only those who have lived in Venice can have an idea of the immense signification of this simple fact. The flower-girls, the vendors of candy, the singers, the exploiters of Chinese puppets, and even the ruffians, had disappeared. No one in the chairs, no one on the benches, no one under the galleries; there was no one even at church, as though it were useless to supplicate a God who left a people to suffer under oppression.

We do not even know whether on that evening the little tapers before the Madonnas of the street corners were lighted.

The music of the retreat played *in deserto* a magnificent overture. German music, however! and an overture by Weber, if we remember correctly!

Not knowing how to pass the latter part of this lugubrious evening, we entered the Apollo theatre. The dark and empty boxes seemed like niches from which coffins had been removed; some squads of Hungarians

half filled the benches. A dozen German functionaries, flanked by their wives and little ones, strove to multiply themselves and to simulate the absent public; but, having deducted the soldiers, the big hall did not contain fifty spectators. A poor troupe played sadly and half-heartedly an insipid translation of a French piece before a row of smoky foot-lights. A cold sorrowfulness, a deadly ennui fell upon us, like a damp and icy mantle.

On the morrow, the sea-breeze had carried away the odor of the powder. The pigeons, reassured, were fluttering around on the Place Saint Mark, and all the Venetians were ostentatiously stuffing themselves with ices at the Café Florian.



## CHAPTER XXI

### THE INSANE ASYLUM

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**T**HE Isle of San Servolo is situated beyond Saint Georges on the great lagune going towards the Lido. This isle is very small, like almost all those which surround Venice; pearls plucked from the casket of the seas. It is almost entirely covered with buildings, and its ancient convent, in which several orders of monks have succeeded each other, has become a hospital for the insane under the Brotherhood of Saint Jean de Dieu, who devote themselves especially to caring for the sick.

When we left the landing of the Place Saint Mark the wind was against us; the water of the lagune, ordinarily so calm, gave itself the airs of an ocean, and its little ripples endeavored to swell themselves into billows: the foam flew under the toothed beak of the gondola and the waves chopped quite noisily against the sides of the vessel, which was pushed forward, however, by two vigorous oarsmen; for our little Antonio alone would not have been sufficient to struggle against the stormy weather.

We danced about quite enough to cause a stomach unaccustomed to the motion to experience the nausea of seasickness; fortunately, a great many sea crossings had rendered us less susceptible to this malady, and we tranquilly admired the dexterity with which our gondoliers at the prow and at the poop kept their equilibrium on their unsteady flooring. We should doubtless have postponed our visit but for the fact that thus far we had seen Venice only under its blue and rosy aspect, with its smooth sea scintillating in small green stretches,

as in the pictures of Canaletto, and we did not wish to lose this opportunity to see the effect of a storm upon it.

Certainly, azure is the natural background upon which the milk-white cupolas of Santa Maria della Salute and the silver caps of Saint Mark ought to stand out; nevertheless, great masses of grayish clouds broken by streaks of light, a sea of a glaucous tone, festooned with foam, framing the frosty-looking edifices in cold tints, produce a great English aquarelle in the style of Bonnington, Callow, or William Wyld, which is by no means to be despised.

Such was the spectacle we beheld in turning around; opposite us we had San Servolo, with its reddish bell-turret and its buildings with tiled roofs half hidden by the clouds; further on, the low, dark line of the Lido is visible, separating the lagune from the open sea.

Close at hand there filed rapidly past us, like black swallows skimming the waves, a number of gondolas returning to the city, flying before the storm and pursued by the wind which was against us.

At last we arrived at the wharf of San Servolo, and the sea caused our frail boat to rock to such an extent that we had some difficulty in getting ashore.

There is nothing very strange or curious about the interior of the convent-hospital: there are long, white-washed corridors, halls of a cold propriety and monotonous regularity, as in all buildings of this kind. No great amount of work was necessary in order to convert the cells of the monks into dungeons for the insane. In the chapel, a gilded retable, a few blackened and smoky canvases that might possibly be Tintoretto's, and that is all. Moreover, it was not works of art or architecture that we were looking for in this Venetian bedlam.

Insanity has always strangely interested us. How a material organ suffers, is impaired, or falls into decay, one can easily conceive; but how an idea, an impalpable

abstraction can be injured in its essence is scarcely comprehensible. Lesions of the brain do not explain insanity. At what point does thought come in contact with that inflamed or softened pulp contained in the osseous case? In ordinary cases, the body dies and the soul flies away; but here the soul dies and the body still lives; there is nothing more sinister and more mysterious. The ship sails without a compass, the flame has quitted the lamp, and life no longer has the Ego. Does the obscured soul of the lunatic regain its lucidity after death, or are there souls mad throughout all eternity? May not the soul be neither immaterial nor immortal, since it can be sick and die? Terrible doubts, deep abysses over which one leans tremblingly, but which attract you almost irresistibly, like all abysses.

Moreover, it is with an anxious curiosity mingled with a secret terror, that we look upon those cadavers, whose remnant of soul serves only to prevent putrefaction, walking around the walls with dull eyes, faded cheeks, hanging lips, dragging feet, to which the will no longer conveys its fluid, making gestures without meaning, like animals or broken-down machines, insensible alike to the burning sun or the chilling rain, having no longer any knowledge of themselves, or imagining themselves to be others, no longer discerning objects under their real aspects, and surrounded by a world of weird hallucinations.

How many times have we visited Charenton, Bicêtre, and other asylums for the insane, disturbed by this great, insoluble problem, and engaged, like Hamlet with the skull of Yorick, in seeking the crack through which the soul had fled like water from a pitcher. But, in our case, a more horrible circumstance, the skull was alive! How many times we have lingered in pensive mood before that superb psychological engraving of Kaulbach, that striking and saddening poem of dementia!

In the corridors, under grayish hats, like monstrous worms dragging themselves upon the walls after the rain, the harmless imbeciles who could be permitted to wander around without danger to themselves or others, crept about aimlessly. They gazed upon us with dull eyes, leering, and essaying a species of mechanical salutation.

Insanity, which is increasing to an alarming extent, does not always suspend all the faculties. Insane folk have written poetry and painted pictures in which the recollection of certain laws of art had survived the shipwreck of the reason. Quantity is often carefully observed in the poetry of complete mental aberration. Domenico Theotocopuli, the Greek painter whose work we admired in the churches and museums of Spain, has painted mad masterpieces. We saw in England furious combats of lions and stallions, executed by a madman upon a board, into which he burned his drawings with the red-hot point of a bar of iron, and which had the appearance of a sketch by Gericault rubbed with bitumen.

One of the insane at San Servolo, although not an artist by profession, had a mania for painting, and the good brothers of Saint John de Dieu, who make it a rule not to oppose their patients more than is absolutely necessary, had given over to him for the exercise of his fancy, a large expanse of wall, upon which he took pleasure in scrawling the strangest imaginable chimeras. This insensate fresco represents a species of brick façade, divided into arcades, whose empty spaces formed dens in which a menagerie of the most extravagant looking creatures were struggling with each other.

The most savage canvases of the traveling booths in which heraldic animals and Chinese or Japanese monsters of the greatest possible weirdness and deformity are exhibited to the gaping crowd, are creatures of a



flat and commonplace plausibility in comparison with the creations of this delirious mind. The fantasies of the absurd dreams of Rabelais applied to the animal kingdom, or the Apocalypse transported into a menagerie, alone could convey an idea of them. Add to this an execution of preposterous ignorance and truculent barbarity; there were eagles with four heads which had torn off at a stroke the beak of the double-necked eagle of Austria; there were crowned lions with mouths bristling with teeth like sharks, so fierce of aspect that they would have caused the lions of Saint Mark and of Northumberland to recoil with fright; pythons, so twisted up in their folds and darting such forked tongues, that all the arrows of Apollo in the ceiling of Eugene Delacroix would not have sufficed to pierce them; beasts without form and without name, the equivalents of which could scarcely be found in the world of the microscope or the caverns of antediluvian deposits.

The artist of this fresco of dementia firmly believed in the existence of these deformed chimeras and claimed to have painted them from nature.

San Servolo contained another peculiar crazy man. He was a man belonging to the lower classes, who had lost his reason as the result of a fit of jealous rage. His wife had been seduced by a gondolier, and he had surprised them, it is said, together. Every time that this recollection returned to him, he uttered frightful shrieks, rolled on the ground or sank his teeth into the flesh of his arms, believing that he was devouring his rival, without being made aware by the pain that he was staining his lips with his own blood, and lacerating his own flesh. There was but one thing that could distract his mind from this raging madness — the sinking of an artesian well which M. Degousée was engaged in upon the island. Water was one of the needs of the island,

and it had to be brought from Fusine by the canal of the Brenta. The lunatic became interested in the progress of the work and joined the laborers with much dexterity and energy. When satisfied with himself, he decorated his person with crosses of honor, discs of gold or silver paper, cordons of various colors, which he wore with the most lofty and dignified air, as a diplomat wears his cross in the salon of an ambassador. If he was lazy, inattentive, or awkward, he degraded himself, removed his insignia and addressed himself in words of reprobation, assuming, according to circumstances, an humble or irritated tone, suited to the character of the speaker whom he was personating. The monks told us that his criticisms were very correct and that he treated himself with rigorous severity. Once only did he excuse himself, not being able to resist the eloquence of the supplications which he addressed to himself.

Other insane people tranquilly played ball in a sort of barren garden surrounded by walls, forming the point of the island on the side toward the Lido; two or three walked with hurried steps, pursued by some terrifying hallucination. Another, thin, wizened, his head bared to the wind, remained motionless as a heron on the border of a marsh, doubtless believing himself to be the bird whose attitude he was imitating.

But that which impressed us most vividly was a young monk, who with his back against a wall watched their promenade. Never will that face depart from our memory, in which it is fixed as the ideal of asceticism. Just as we were astonished by those bodies which live without souls, we had suddenly before our eyes a soul which lived without the body. Here the spirit alone shone, mortifications had suppressed matter; the human being was annihilated.

His head, surrounded by a circle of hair and shaved on its upper part, seemed to have become green with ca-

daverous tints. One might say that the mustiness of the sepulchre had already covered the bluish down of his skin; his eyes, intoxicated with faith, sparkled from beneath a large yellowish bruise, and his drooping jaws were joined to his chin by two lines as straight as the lines of a triangle; when he lowered his head, between his neck and the cowl of his robe appeared a string of vertebræ on which this meagre spirit of the cloister might have told his beads.

His trembling hands, the color of yellow wax, were only a network of veins and nerves. His sleeves fluttered on his fleshless arm like a streamer on a pole. His robe fell from his shoulders to his heels, perfectly straight, without a single fold, as rigid as a drapery of Cimabue or of Orcagna, as might fall the winding-sheet of a corpse or of a spectre, not permitting the form to be divined by any inflection. Our frightened glance sought to find the man under this brown shroud; there was nothing there but a shadow.

The kneeling corpses of Zurbaran, with their violet mouths, their leaden tint, the pale phantoms of Lesueur in their dazzling linen, would have appeared as Silenuses and Falstaffs by the side of this monk of San Servolo; never did the consumptive emaciation of the art of the Middle Ages, never the ferocious asceticism of Spanish painting dare to go so far. The Saint Bonaventure of Murillo returning to write his memoirs after his death, could alone give an idea of this terrifying figure, and yet he would have been less emaciated, less hollow, less green, and more alive, although he had been buried for a fortnight. We have never liked the monks of Rabelais, gross, short, big-bellied, eating heartily and drinking a great deal; and Brother Jean des Entommeures only pleased us in Gargantua and in Pantagruel. This one delighted us, and we do not know what amiable pleasantries the Voltaireans might hazard on his account.

This poor monk was the confessor of the insane. What a terrible and sinister occupation ! to hear the incoherent avowals of these troubled souls, to elucidate the cases of conscience of the delirious, to receive the confidences of hallucination, to see grimacing across the bar of wood the convulsed face, the idiot laugh, the imbecile watering of the eyes, to confess the menagerie ! We were no longer astonished at his strange look, his skeleton-like thinness, and his deadly pallor.

How could he undertake to introduce the idea of God into these eternal repetitions of dementia, into this garrulousness of idiocy ? What could he say to those unhappy beings who had no longer a soul, who could not sin, and with whom even crime is innocent ?

Could he wave before these poor broken-down imaginations the red braziers of hell, in order to restrain, through terror, their depraved fantasies ? or does he open to their hopes some infantile paradise far away over the sea, with grassy swards bedecked with flowers, upon which the white doves feed, where the peacocks drag their starry tails, where rivulets of cream trickle from rock-work of meringues, — a heaven of pastry and confectionery ?

During our visit the weather became calm to such an extent that we resolved to take advantage of what daylight was left us to go on to the Lido. There are at the Lido some country taverns where the common people go to dine and dance on feast days. This is not the mainland ; still some few trees grow there. Meagre tufts of grass make not very successful efforts in the way of producing lawns ; but the good-will is taken for the deed, and the foot which has glided all the week over the flagstones of Venice is not sorry to bury itself in the shifting sands which the sea heaps up.

As it was a week-day, the Lido was deserted and of an aspect not at all gay. But the tumult of a popular joy

would have been uncongenial to us at this moment; and the solitude of this barren strand fitted in with the serious nature of our thoughts. We walked the length of that beach where the great Byron used to gallop his horses, and where the Venetians come in droves to bathe. The beautiful country-women of Titian and Paul Veronese hide themselves while disrobing behind frail tents upheld by sticks; since the wheeled cabinet of Dieppe and Biarritz has fortunately not penetrated thus far.

As the weather was chilly we did not have any anacreontic encounter, and re-embarking upon our gondola we returned to the Place Saint Mark, where, after having heard the music of the retreat, we retired to our Campo San Mose to sleep a troubled slumber in which the monk of San Servolo, the features of the insane, and the fantastic monsters of the fresco were combined in a nightmare as extravagant and sombre as a romance of Lewis or of Mathurin.



## CHAPTER XXII

### SAINT BLAISE—THE CAPUCHINS

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THERE is no one who, at least once in his life, has not been possessed by a musical *motif*, a fragment of poetry, a shred of talk, heard by chance and which pursues him everywhere with the stubbornness of a spectre.

A monotonous voice keeps whispering in one ear the accursed subject, a mute orchestra plays at the base of your brain, your pillow repeats it to you, your dreams murmur it to you, an invincible power forces you to mumble it imbecilely from morning till night like a devotee droning her litany.

For a week, a song of Alfred de Musset, — an imitation, no doubt, of some old popular Venetian poem, — has hovered on our lips like the chirping of a bird, without our being able to make it fly away. In spite of ourselves we hum under our breath in the most incongruous situations :

A Saint-Blaise à la Zuecca,  
Vous étiez, vous étiez bien aise  
A Saint-Blaise.

A Saint-Blaise, à la Zuecca,  
Nous étions bien là.

Mais de vous en souvenir  
Prendrez-vous la peine  
Mais de vous en souvenir  
Et d'y revenir.

A Saint-Blaise à la Zuecca,  
Dans les prés fleuris cueillir la verveine :  
A Saint-Blaise à la Zuecca,  
Vivre et mourir là.

**VENICE**

*The Schiavoni Quay from the Custom House*









*La Zuecca* (abbreviation of *la Giudecca*) was before us, separated only by the width of the Canal, and nothing could be easier for us than to go to this Saint Blaise of which the song makes a species of Isle of Cythera, a languorous Eldorado, a terrestrial paradise of life, where it would be sweet to live and die. A few strokes of the oars would have conducted us thither; but we resisted the temptation, knowing that it is necessary to keep away from enchanted shores unless one wishes to see the mirage dissolve in vapor, and we continued to be insufferable with our refrain:

A Saint-Blaise, à la Zuecca,

which began to become what is called a saw, in the slang of the studio—a saw with fine teeth, although without malice on our part. Moreover, our traveling companion, our dear Louis who for a week had tolerated this melody, importunate as the buzzing of a mosquito, with that charming placidity and imperceptible smile which gives his head, with the beard of Kabyle, so fine and sympathetic an expression, could no longer contain himself, and he said one morning to the young Antonio, upon putting his foot into the gondola, “A Saint Blaise, a la Zuecca!” For the purpose of disgusting us with it, he caused us to be conducted to the midst of our dreams and of our refrain—an excellent homœopathic remedy.

We found our Saint Blaise not yet in bloom, and we were unable, to our great regret, to pluck there a single lemon-blossom. Around the church extended patches of cultivation,—marshy gardens in which vegetables took the place of flowers. Our disappointment prevented us from admiring some very fine grapes and some superb pumpkins. It is probable that at the time the song was composed, the point of the island was occupied by undulating ground, the fresh grass of which

was besprinkled with the flowers of spring, and where loving couples were wont to stroll, hand in hand, gazing at the moon.

An old Venetian guide-book describes the *Zucca* as a place full of gardens, orchards, and delightful spots. Instead of a favorite flower of soft colors and penetrating perfume, expanding amidst the green turf, to encounter tun-bellied pumpkins yellowing under big leaves, is something calculated to calm the most ardent poetic enthusiasm, and from that moment we sang no more —

A Saint-Blaise, à la Zucca.

In order to make the best of our jaunt, we went along the island as far as the Church of the Redeemer, situated near a convent of Capuchin monks. This church has one of those beautiful Greek façades of an elegant style and harmonious proportions, like those which Palladio so well knew how to draw. These specimens of architecture are very pleasing to people of taste. They are sober, pure, and classical. At the risk of being accused of barbarity of taste, we admit that they have very little charm for us. We recognize only, as proper for Catholic churches, the Byzantine, Roman, or Gothic styles. The Grecian art was so appropriate to polytheism that it is difficult to connect it with any other thought. Moreover, churches built according to its plans, have in no degree the religious stamp in the sense we attach to that word; the luminous antique serenity, with its perfect rhythm and its logic of forms, cannot render the vague, infinite, profound, mysterious meanings of Christianity. The unalterable gaiety of paganism does not comprehend the incurable Christian melancholy, and Greek architecture produces only, so far as its temples are concerned, palaces, bourses, dance-halls, and galleries more or less ornate, in which Jupi-

ter might find comfort, but in which the Saviour could house himself with difficulty.

If the style be allowed, the Church of the Redeemer makes a sufficiently beautiful appearance on the bank of the Canal, in which it admires itself with its grand monumental staircase of seventeen marble steps, its triangular pediment, its Corinthian columns, its doorway and its bronze statues, its two towers and its white cupola, which make such a fine effect in the sunsets when one drifts in the offing in his gondola between the Public Gardens and Saint George.

This church was erected in fulfilment of a vow made by the Senate in order to avert the plague of 1576, which caused a frightful mortality in the city, and carried off, among other illustrious personages, Titian, that patriarch of painters, loaded with years and with glory.

The interior is very simple, even a trifle bare. Whether money was wanting or from some wholly different cause, the statues which appear to fill the niches along the nave are only deceptive imitations skilfully executed in monotone by Father Piazza, the Capuchin. The niches are real, but the statues, painted on boards, betray their secret by the absence of thickness when seen in profile, for in front they offer a complete illusion. This same Piazza has painted in the refectory of the convent a scene on which the letter P appears signed six times, which is interpreted in the following manner: "*Pietro Paolo Piazza Per Poco Prezzo*" — Peter Paul Piazza, for a small price. He had undoubtedly been poorly paid for his work and revenged himself in this manner.

As for the paintings, it would be necessary to recommence the usual litany, — Tintoretto, Bassan, Paul Veronese, — and we have no intention of enumerating them for you one after another.

There is such an abundance of fine paintings in Venice that one finally becomes almost discouraged in regard to them and is led to believe that in those days it was not more difficult to execute a superb church picture than it is nowadays for one familiar with the pen to scribble a page. Still, we recommend to the traveler a Jean Bellin of great beauty, which adorns the sacristy. The subject is that of the Holy Virgin with the Infant Jesus, between Saint Jerome and Saint Francis: the Divine Mother regards with an air of profound adoration the Bambino asleep upon her lap. Little smiling angels playing the guitar hover upon a background of ultramarine. It is well known with what delicacy, what feeling, what virginity of soul, Jean Bellin treated his familiar scenes with his pencil; but here, besides the innocent charm of the composition, the Gothic fidelity of design, there is a splendor of coloring, a blonde warmth of tone, which reminds one of Giorgione. Moreover, some connoisseurs attribute this picture to Palma the elder. We believe it to be the work of Jean Bellin; the unusual brilliancy of coloring is due solely to the more perfect preservation of the painting. Venice is so naturally colorist, that the gray is impossible there, even for draughtsmen, and even the most severe Gothics in Venice gild their asceticism with Giorgionesque amber.

Two or three Capuchin monks at prayer would have given to this church, if it had been less brilliantly lighted, the air of one of those pictures of Granet so much admired twenty years ago. One of them was humbly sweeping the choir, and we asked him if we might visit the monastery. He assented to our request with much politeness and caused us to enter the cloister by a little side door of the church.

We had for a long time cherished a desire to visit the interior of an inhabited monastery. In Spain we were

unable to gratify this religious and picturesque wish, as the monks had been secularized, and the convents, as in France after the Revolution, had become national property. We walked melancholily through the Chartreuse of Miraflores, near Burgos, where we found only one old father accoutered in black vestments midway between the costume of a peasant and that of a priest, who smoked his cigarette, and who guided us through the deserted corridors and abandoned cloisters, on which empty cells opened. At Toledo, the convent of Saint Jean des Rois, an admirable ruined edifice, contained only some frightened lizards and furtive adders whom the noise of our footsteps caused to disappear under the brambles and rubbish. The refectory was still almost entire, and above the doorway a frightful painting displayed a corpse in a state of putrefaction, from the stomach of which was issuing, mingled with bloody matter, the unclean hosts of the sepulchre; this piece had for its purpose the repression of the sensuality of the repast which was served nevertheless with an eremitic austerity. The Chartreuse of Grenada contained nothing but turtles, which jumped hurriedly into the water of the fish-pond on the approach of a visitor; and the magnificent convent of San Domingo, on the slope of the Ante Querula, listened, in the most profound solitude, to the babbling of its fountains and the rustling of the branches of its laurel-trees.

The Capuchin monastery of the Zuecca did not greatly resemble those admirable edifices with their long white marble cloisters, their elegantly carved arcades, marvels of the Middle Ages or of the Renaissance, their courts planted with jasmines, myrtles, and rose-laurels, their gushing fountains, their cells permitting the view from their windows of the blue velvet, frosted with silver, of the Sierra Nevada. It was not one of those splendid asylums in which austerity is only an additional charm

for the soul and to which the philosopher can accommodate himself as well as the Christian.

The cloister was not relieved by any architectural adornment, — low arcades, short pillars, — a prison yard rather than a promenade ground for the purpose of revery. A wretched roof of tiles of a strident red covered the whole. It did not even possess that severe, sad nakedness, those cold, gray tones, that soberness favorable to reflection; a harsh, flickering light crudely lighted these poor details, and exaggerated the prosaic and trivial poverty. In the garden, which was partly visible from the cloisters, could be seen rows of cabbages and vegetables of a harsh green. There was not a shrub, not a flower, everything was sacrificed to a strict utility.

We next penetrated into the interior of the convent through passages intersecting each other at right angles. At the end of these corridors were little shrines built in the walls and colored with rude frescoes in honor of the Madonna or of some saint of the order.

The windows, with panes soldered with lead, afforded some light, but without producing those effects of light and shade which painters know how to put to such good use. One might say that in this building everything was calculated in order to produce the greatest amount of ugliness in the least possible space.

Here and there were hanging engravings pasted upon canvas, representing, by an infinity of little medallions, all the saints, all the cardinals, all the prelates, all the illustrious personages furnished by the order, — a species of genealogical tree of that impersonal family, renewed without cessation.

Low doors at regular intervals marked the long white lines of the walls. Over each of these could be read a religious reflection, a prayer, one of those brief Latin maxims which contain a world of ideas. To the in-



scription was added an image of the Virgin, or the portrait of a saint or holy woman, the special object of devotion of the occupant of the cell.

A vast roof of tiles, supported by a visible framework, covered, without touching them, the cells of these monastic bees, like a lid placed upon rows of boxes.

We heard a bell ring, denoting a meal or perhaps a call to prayer or some other ascetic exercise. The doors of the cells opened, and the passages, a moment before deserted, were filled with an array of monks who, with lowered heads, their long beards extending to their breasts, took up their line of march two by two, toward that part of the convent to which the ringing of the bell called them. When they raised their feet, their sandals leaving their heels made a sort of very monastic and very lugubrious clapping, which rhymed sorrowfully with their spectre-like march.

As many as forty passed before us, and we saw only thick-skulled, dull, brutish heads, without character, in spite of the beard and shaven crown. Ah! how different from that monk of San Servolo, so consumed with ardor, so calcined by faith, so torn by macerations, and whose feverish eye already shone with the light of the other world, the ecstatic confessor of delirium! Daniel in the midst of lions!

We certainly entered this convent with feelings which, if not pious, were at least respectful. If we have no faith ourselves, we at least admire it in others, and if we cannot believe, at least we can understand. We had prepared ourselves to feel all the austere poetry of the cloister, and we were very cruelly disappointed.

The convent had upon us the effect of a sick-room, of an insane asylum, or of the barracks. A nauseating odor as of a human menagerie took us by the nose and disheartened us. If one could say of certain holy personages that they had the madness of the cross, *stultitiam*

*crucis*, it seemed to us that these monks had that idiocy ; and in spite of ourselves our spirit rebelled, and we blushed for God on account of such a degradation of the creatures made in His image.

We were ashamed that a hundred men should gather themselves in such a hole in order to be dirty and to stink according to certain rules in honor of Him who had created eighty million species of flowers. That nauseating incense revolted us, and we experienced in regard to those poor Capuchin fathers an involuntary and secret horror.

We could not refrain from asking this question of ourselves, viz.: Would it not be better for these robust fellows, made for the plough, to throw their frocks aside, return to human life and gain their salvation by working for it, instead of going without a shirt and of trailing their sandals along the cloister in idleness and brutishness?

When we went out from the convent, two of the fathers who had business in Venice begged us to take them in our gondola across the canal of the *Giudecca*. By reason of humility they would not accept the place of honor under the *felce* which we offered them, and stood up near the prow. They made quite a good appearance, too ; their brown frocks formed two or three great folds which Fra Bartolomeo would not have disdained for the robe of Saint Francis of Assisi. Their naked feet in their sandals were very fine, the big toe separated, the toes long, as in the feet of ancient statues.

We gave them some money to say masses for us. The Voltairean ideas which had been working in us all the time of our visit deserved such Christian submission on our part, and if it was the devil who had aroused them he ought to have felt tricked and begun to bite his tail like a monkey in a rage.

The good fathers took the money, slipping it in the fold of their robe, and perceiving us to be such good Catholics, gave us some little images which we have carefully preserved: Saint Moise, prophet; Saint Francis; some other bearded saints and a certain Veronica Giuliani, a Capuchin abbess, whose head is upturned and whose eyes swim in ecstasy like those of the Spanish Saint Theresa, who complained to the devil of not being able to love, and has not been placed on the Index as we were for an idea of the same nature. We landed the good fathers at the quay of San Mose, and they quickly disappeared in the narrow lanes.

The day had not been a favorable one for illusions; at Saint Blaise, at the Zuecca, the pumpkin replaced the lemon blossoms, and where we counted upon finding a stern cloister with livid monks after the manner of Zurburan we had encountered an ignoble monastery with monks like those of the colored lithographs of Schlesinger. This deception was especially cruel for us; since, for a long time we had hugged the dream of finishing our days under a monk's frock in some beautiful convent of Italy or Portugal, at Mont Cassin or at Maffra, and now we had no more desire for such a life at all.



## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE CHURCHES

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WITH the exception of Saint Mark's, a marvel which has no analogue except the Mosque of Constantinople and the Mosque of Cordova, the churches of Venice are not very remarkable in the matter of architecture, or at least have nothing likely to surprise the traveler who has visited the cathedrals of France, of Spain, and of Belgium. Save some few which date farther back, they all belong to the Renaissance and to the *rococo genre*, which, in Italy, very quickly followed the return to classic traditions. The first are in the Palladian style ; the latter of a peculiar type which we will call Jesuit. Almost all the old churches of the city have been unfortunately rebuilt under the one or the other of these influences.

Certainly Palladio, as so many noble edifices prove him, was an architect of great merit ; but he had nothing of the Catholic feeling, and was more fitted to rebuild the temples of Diana of Ephesus, and the Panhellenic Jupiter than to erect a basilica of the Nazarene or some martyr of the Golden Legend. He has pilfered like a bee the honey of Hymettus, and put aside in his flight the flowers of the Passion. As far as the Jesuit style is concerned, with its gibbous domes, its stumpy columns, its bloated cherubs, its distorted volutes like the flourishes of Joseph Prudhomme, its emasculated angels, its big endives like cabbages, its unhealthy affectations and its fiery ornamentations, which might be taken for excrescences of sick stone, we profess for ourselves an insurmountable horror. It more than displeases us, it disgusts us. Nothing, according to our view, is more

opposed to the Christian idea than this unclean litter of devotees, than this display without beauty, without grace, overloaded and heavy as a luxuriousness of the languid, which makes the chapel of the Most Holy Virgin resemble the boudoir of an opera girl. The Church of the Scalzi is of this order, a model of extravagant richness; the walls incrustated with colored marble, represent an immense tapestry of green and white flowered damask; the frescoed ceilings by Tiepoletto and Lazzarini, of a gay, light, clear tone, in which the rose and azure are the dominating colors, would be marvelously appropriate for a ball-room or a theatre. It ought to be charming, full of powdered abbés and beautiful ladies of the times of Casanova or of the Cardinal of Bernis, during a musical mass by Porpora, with violins and the choirs of the Fenice. In truth, nothing could be more natural than to worship the Eternal in such a place with dance-tunes. But how much more do we prefer the low Romanesque arcades, the stocky pillars of porphyry with antique capitals, the barbarous images which stand out upon the glitter of gold of the Byzantine mosaics, or even still more the long ribs, the slender columns and the carved trefoils, cut out as though by machinery, of the Gothic cathedrals!

These defects of architecture to which it is necessary to become resigned in Italy, since almost all the churches are built more or less in this style, are compensated for by the number and beauty of the objects of art which these edifices contain. If one may not admire the casket, he still can admire the jewels. There only are Titian, Paul Veronese, Tintoretto, the Palmas, elder and younger, Jean Bellin, the Paduan, Bonifazio and other marvelous masters. Each chapel has its museum, which would confer honor upon a king. This very Church of the Scalzi, overlooking its general style, offers remarkable details: its broad staircase in red brocatelle of

Verona, its beautiful truncated columns in marble from France, its gigantic prophets, its stone balustrades, its doors of mosaic, have a certain style and are not lacking in grandeur. It contains a very fine picture by Jean Bellin, the Virgin and Child; a magnificent bronze bas-relief by Sansovino, and a group less severe artistically, but still charming, by Toretti, the master of Canova; a Holy Family, Saint Joseph, the Virgin and Child Jesus. The Virgin has a fine figure, plump, a coquettish pose of the head, and extremities of a wholly aristocratic delicacy. She has the air of a duchess of the Court of Louis XV, and one cannot otherwise imagine Madame de Pompadour. Some ballet angels, the work of Marcel, accompany this pretty worldly group. This is not religious, of a surety; but this affected and spirituelle grace has a great deal of charm and this sculptor of the Decadence is withal a great artist.

The Church of Saint Sebastian, built by S. Serlio, is in some sort the picture gallery and the Pantheon of Paul Veronese. He worked there many years, he reposes there eternally in the aureole of his *chefs d'œuvre*. His monumental stone is there surmounted by his bust, escutcheoned with his arms, three trefoils on a field which we could not distinguish. Let us admire this Saint Sebastian of Titian: what a beautiful head of an old woman, what a superb and lofty bearing, and what a pretty and innocent motion is that of the child who holds the mitre of the holy bishop! But let us pass quickly to reach the master of the place, the great Paolo Caliari. The three Marys at the foot of the cross are noticeable on account of that magnificent co-ordination, that sufficient amplitude characteristic of this painter, who has never been equalled in the art of furnishing the empty spaces of great compositions. The brocades, the damasks, break in opulent folds, and the Christ on the tree of suffering cannot conceal a vague half smile, —

the joy of being so well painted consoles Him in His agony. The Magdalen is adorably beautiful ; her grand eyes are drowned in light and in tears ; a tear still hanging trembles at the side of her purplish mouth, like a drop of rain upon a rose. The background of the landscape is unfortunately a little too much like the scenery of the theatre. "The Presentation of Jesus Christ in the Temple" is also a very remarkable canvas in spite of the large-limbed personages placed in the foreground of the picture ; but the head of Saint Simeon is of a divine unction and of a marvelous execution, and the Child Jesus is presented with an audacity of foreshortening that is astonishing. In the corner of the picture a dog, with its nose mournfully raised in the air, seems to bay at the moon. There is nothing to justify the presence of this isolated animal, but everyone is aware of the predilection of Paul Veronese for dogs, especially for greyhounds ; he has placed them in all his pictures, and the Church of Saint Sebastian actually contains the only canvas in which he has not introduced one, which is noticed as a unique curiosity in the work of the master. We have not verified the truth of this assertion for ourselves ; but in thinking upon the subject, it seems to us that a painting of Paul Veronese always presents itself to the memory accompanied by a white hound, in the same manner that a canvas of Garofalo seems to be flowered and signed with his inevitable carnation. Some amateur, with sufficient leisure, ought to investigate the truth of this characteristic detail.

The purest of these picturesque diamonds is the "Martyrdom of Saint Mark" and "Saint Marcellinus Encouraged by Saint Sebastian." Art can scarcely go further, and this picture ought to take its place among the seven wonders of the human race.

What color and what designing in this group of a woman and a child, that the eye encounters on first

examining the canvas! What ineffable unction, what celestial resignation diffused upon the visages of the two saints already luminous with the future aureole, and how charming is this woman's head which appears in a three-quarter view above the shoulders of Saint Sebastian, young, blonde, animated by emotion, the eye full of sadness and solicitude! This head, which is all that is visible of the person, has a movement so correct, an outline so perfect that the rest of the body is conjectured without difficulty behind the interposed group which hides it; one can follow the invisible lines to the end, so exact is the anatomy.

Saint Sebastian is, it is said, the portrait of Paul Veronese, and the young woman that of his wife. They were both of them then in the flower of their age, and she had not yet acquired that full and heavy matronly beauty which characterizes her in the portraits which remain of her, among others, in the gallery of the Pitti Palace in Florence. Draperies, details, accessories, everything, is finished with that extreme care and conscientiousness of first works, when the artist labors only to satisfy his genius and his heart. It is almost at the base of this canvas that the painter is interred. No more brilliant lamp illumines the shadow of a tomb, and the *chef d'œuvre* shines radiantly above the coffin like the flamboyance of an apotheosis.

The "Crowning of Mary in Heaven" takes place in the midst of irradiations and scintillations of such a light as has never existed save upon the palettes of Paul Veronese. In that atmosphere of gold and silver in fusion which traverses the hair of Christ, there swims a Mary of a beauty so celestially human as to make your heart beat while you bow your head.

"The Crowning of Esther by Ahasuerus" is of an unequalled grandeur and opulence of tone. Here Paul Veronese has displayed at his ease his gorgeous style;



the pearls, the satins, the velvets, the brocades of gold scintillate, shimmer, and sparkle in luminous breaks. What a virile and spirited carriage the warrior in the foreground has, under the careless anachronism of his armour!

The sacristy also contains some of Veronese's paintings, but they belong to the time of his early youth. In order to explain the prodigious abundance of his productions in this church, there is a legend of many versions: first, a special devotion on the part of the artist for Saint Sebastian; again, and this is more romantic, the murder of a rival had obliged him to seek a refuge in this place of asylum, which, out of gratitude, he embellished during his leisure. According to others, it was to escape the vengeance of a Senator, a caricature of whom he had exposed on the Place Saint Mark, that the painter kept himself hidden for two years in Saint Sebastian's. We give these stories of the sacristan for what they are worth, without taking the trouble to criticize them.

Before going forth from this radiant church, all the riches of which we are far from having indicated, if you lower your eyes, dazzled by the phosphorescence of the ceiling, to the grayish pavement, you will discover at your feet an humble stone which covers the vault of a dynasty of gondoliers. The first name inscribed is that of Zorzi de Cataro, of the Quay of Barnaba, under date of 1505. The last bears the numerals of 1785. The Republic did not long survive the Zorzi.

The Church of Santa Maria dei Frari is not of the atrocious classical or Jesuit type of which we spoke a moment ago; its ogives, its lancet windows, its Romanesque tower, its great walls of red brick, give it a more religious aspect. It has above the doorway a statue of Victory representing the Saviour. This church, constructed by Nicolas Pisano, dates from 1250.

It is here that the tomb of Canova is to be found; this monument, which the artist had designed for Titian, modified in some particulars, served for himself. We do not admire it; it is pretentious, theatrical, and cold. At the base of a pyramid of green marble fastened to the wall of a chapel, yawns the black door of a vault, toward which a procession of statues elevated upon the steps of the monument takes its way; at the head marches a funereal figure carrying a sepulchral urn; behind come genii and allegories holding torches and garlands of flowers.

In order to counterbalance this part of the composition, a great nude figure which doubtless symbolizes the uncertainty of life, leans upon a torch which she extinguishes, and the winged lion of Saint Mark sorrowfully lowers his muzzle upon his paws, in a pose analogous to that of the famous lion of Thorwaldsen. Above the doorway two genii sustain the medallion of Canova.

This tomb seems all the more poor and paltry in idea and execution, because the Church of the Frari is full of ancient monuments of the most beautiful style and most pleasing effect. There repose Alvise Pascaligo, Marzotto Zeno, Jacopo Barbaro, Jacopo Marcello, Benedetto Pesaro, in sarcophagi adorned by statues of marvelous modelling and spiritedness.

A tryptich by Vivarini which dates back to 1482, is to be admired, and a Virgin draped in a white veil by Titian has a charming effect.

The equestrian statue of General Colleoni, who has a grand carriage upon his mount of bronze, first arrests the eye when one arrives by the canal at the little Place at the end of which the Church of Saint John and Saint Paul rises. Although its construction dates back to the thirteenth or fourteenth century, it was not consecrated until 1430. The tympanum of the façade is pretty and the circular arcade which overhangs it wonderfully

sculptured with flowers and fruits. One goes to Saint John and Saint Paul principally in order to see the "Death of Saint Peter" by Titian; a picture so precious that it is forbidden to sell it under penalty of death. We like this artistic ferocity, and it is the only case for which it appears to us that capital punishment should be reserved. Nevertheless, in spite of all its beauty, other pictures of Titian seem to us as worthy as this one of a like jealousy on the part of Venice. The scene takes place in a wood; Saint Peter is turned head downward, the executioner holds him by the arm and already raises his sword; an affrighted priest is fleeing away, and in the sky two angels appear, ready to receive the soul of the martyr. The executioner is perfectly placed. An expression of bestial fury contracts his features. His eyes glare under his low forehead like those of a tiger. His nostrils dilate and scent blood. But there is perhaps too much fright and too little resignation in the head of the Saint. He sees only the blade whose cold steel is about to pass between his vertebrae, and he forgets that on high, in the azure, hover the celestial messengers with palms and crowns. It is too much like a vulgar convict whose head is about to be cut off and whom the fact afflicts. The monk himself is so frightened, so stiffened by terror, that he with difficulty saves himself.

Whatever opportunity the composition may afford to the critic, still one can only admire on his knees the magnificent landscape, so grand, so full of style; the simple coloring, virile and robust, the broad and grandiose execution, the unequalled sovereignty of touch which reveals the god of painting. Titian, as we have already stated, is the only type of artist which the modern world can oppose to the ancient for calm force, tranquil splendor and eternal serenity.

We might still speak concerning the funereal monuments which cover the walls, of the altar of Saint Dom-

inic, where the story of this saint is modelled in a succession of bas-reliefs in bronze by Joseph Mazza of Bologna; of the Christ on the Cross, by Tintoretto; of some magnificent sculptures in the chapel of Sainte-Marie des Roses, and of the Crowning of the Virgin, by Palma the elder; but, in a church where there is a Titian, one sees only Titian. That sun extinguishes all the stars.



## CHAPTER XXIV

### CHURCHES, SCHOOLS, AND PALACES

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**S**AINTE FRANÇOIS DES VIGNES, with its white and red bell-turrets, also deserves to be visited. Near the church there is an odd cloister, closed by bars of black wood, which surrounds a species of prison-yard encumbered by wild mallows, nettles, hemlocks, asphodels, burdocks, and other plants peculiar to ruins and to cemeteries, in the midst of which rises a grotto of rock-work, made of coral, much like those little pieces of shell-rock that are sold at Havre and Dieppe. This grotto shelters an effigy of Saint François in wood or colored plaster, a plaything of devotion, a Jesuitical piece of nonsense. Under the damp and greenish arcades of the cloister in the midst of tombs worn away by friction, bearing inscriptions already illegible, we noticed upon a block of stone a gondola sculptured in relief, somewhat corroded but still entirely visible. It covered a vault of gondoliers, like the tomb of the Zorzi de Cattaro in the Church of Saint Sebastian; each quay had its own place of sepulture.

At Saint François des Vignes we saw a picture by Negroponte of remarkable beauty and remarkably well preserved. It is the only one we have encountered by this painter, whose name we had never heard uttered, who, however, deserves to be better known.

We propose to give a somewhat detailed description of it:—The Virgin seated upon a throne, clothed in a robe of gold brocade and a mantle with exquisite embroidery, the hem of which is upheld by a little girl with an air of ingenuous devotion, gazes lovingly upon the infant Jesus lying across her knees. The head

of this Virgin, of an exquisite delicacy, would confer honor upon Jean Bellin, Carpaccio, Perugini, Albert Dürer, or the purest Gothic masters. It is blonde, and her golden locks, treated separately, are confused with the splendor of her three-lobed nimbus, incrustated with precious stones in the Byzantine fashion; above, from the ultramarine background of a naïve Paradise, the Eternal Father looks upon the sacred group in a majestic and satisfied pose; two beautiful angels hold garlands of flowers, and behind the throne, which is covered with goldsmiths' work of gems like that of an empress of the bas-empire, blooms an efflorescence of roses and lilies arranged in a panel and which recall the appellations of the litany.

All is treated with that religious minutia, that infinite patience which seems to take no account of time and which implies the long leisure hours of the cloister. As a matter of fact, Negroponte was a monk, as says the inscription traced upon the picture: "*Pater Antonius Negroponte pinxit.*" But this extreme care detracts in no way from the grandeur of the aspect; the imposing effect, and the richness of coloring struggle victoriously against the glitter of the gold and honeycombed ornamentation. It is at once an image and a jewel, as in our opinion pictures exposed for the adoration of the faithful ought to be. Art, under these circumstances, gains by being arrayed in the hieratic and mysterious luxury of the idol. The Madonna of Father Antoine de Negroponte at Saint François des Vignes fulfils admirably these conditions and sustains with honor the vicinage of the resurrected Christ by Paul Veronese; the Martyrdom of Saint Lawrence of Santa Croce, and the Madonna of Jean Bellin—one of his best works, unfortunately placed in an obscure chapel.

A visit to Saint Pantaleon must not be omitted, if only on account of the immense ceiling by Fumiani,









## ***VENICE***

*Church of the “Salute” (Baldassare Longhena)*

representing different episodes in the life of the Saint, his martyrdom and his apotheosis.

Since the monastic stiffness and the *naïveté* of missal illumination of Father Antoine de Negroponte, many years have passed, and art has made great progress. Nevertheless, how does it happen that this ceiling, which equals in bold facility the "Salon of Hercules" of Lemoine, and the frescoes of the Escorial, by Luca Giordano, leaves you cold in spite of its art of foreshortening, its deception of the eye, all its tricks of execution? It is because, in its method is everything, the hand takes precedence of the head, and because there is no soul in that immense composition hung above your head like a glory of the Opera, by visible cords. The most barren, the most constrained, the most unskilful Gothic has a charm which is lacking in all these great mannerists, so learned, so skilful, so nimble, and whose execution was so expeditious.

In the Church of Sta. Maria della Salute, made famous by the magnificent exterior view which Canaletto has painted of it, and which everyone has seen in the gallery of the Louvre, a superb ceiling by Titian is to be admired, — the killing of Abel by Cain, — executed with a masterly robustness and vigor. It is calm and striking like all the successful works of that unrivalled painter. The architecture is that of Balthasar Longhena; the white cupolas are rounded out against the sky in very graceful curves; one hundred and thirty statues, with flying draperies, in beautifully studied poses, fill the cornice; a very pretty Eve, in the costume of the period, under a rosy sunbeam which tinged her marble with blushing red, smiled upon us every morning from this cornice, when we were stopping at the Hotel de l'Europe. Religion is not stern in Italy, and freely accepts the nudity sanctified by art. We have already recounted, if our memory does not deceive us, the surprise we ex-

perienced upon encountering a similar Eve, still less clothed, if possible, upon the platform of the dome of Saint Mark.

We might continue indefinitely this pilgrimage from church to church, since all contain treasures which would detain us by innumerable descriptions; but we are not pretending to write a guide; we only wish to paint, in a few familiar chapters, Venetian life by a traveler without preconceived prejudices, curious about everything, very much of a saunterer, capable of abandoning an old monument for a young woman who happens to pass by, taking chance for a cicerone, and speaking only of that which he has seen. These are sketches made from nature, daguerreotypes, little bits of mosaic gathered from various places, that we put side by side without taking too much pains to secure a regularity which it is perhaps impossible to obtain in a matter so diffuse as the vagabondage on foot or in a gondola, of a *feuilletonist* spending his vacation in a city unknown to him, and in which so many objects attract one's curiosity upon all sides.

Moreover, without seeking a laborious transition, we are going to lead you straight to the *Scuola de San Rocco*, an elegant edifice with a façade consisting of two rows of superimposed Corinthian columns which are entwined at one-third of their height with the prettiest effect.

Saint Roch, as is well known, enjoys the privilege of curing the plague; he is therefore greatly venerated in Venice on that account, the city being specially exposed to contagion through its connections with Constantinople and the Levantine ports. His statue shows on his uncovered leg a frightful blackened ulcer, for the saints are homœopaths and only cure maladies with which they themselves are afflicted. The plague is treated by a saint afflicted with the plague, ophthalmia by a martyr

who has had his eyes put out, and so on. It is a matter of *similia similibus*, etc. Medicine apart, it is doubtless fancied that these blessed personages have a more tender compassion for those who suffer the same ills which they themselves suffered.

At the school of Saint Roch one finds a low hall painted entirely by Tintoretto, that famous hand for work, and, upon ascending a magnificent monumental staircase by Scarpagnino, one sees, on his right and on his left, as if to justify the name and patronage of the plague-stricken saint, various episodes of the great Venetian epidemic, which might serve as illustrations of the Parisian cholera. These cadaverous paintings are, the one on the right by Antonio Zanchi, that on the left by Pietro Negri.

In the first of these pictures the arrival of the plague at Venice is depicted. The scourge, personified under the figure of a skeleton, traverses the thick and unwholesome atmosphere, borne by a woman with withered breasts, emaciated, fleshless, and green as from putrefaction, who flies with outspread wings, in the pose of the Death of Orcagna. In the foreground, a woman almost in her clutches, is fleeing; she is blonde and plump, like all of the Venetian race, and it would be a real pity if the hideous spectre should catch her, since she is charming in her fright and designed perfectly.

On the other side, a gondolier of gigantic proportions and an exaggerated muscularity, unmoors with a superb movement a boat destined for the transport of the cadavers.

A dead woman, in dark shades and livid flesh, but whose brawny arms and powerful throat show that she has been stricken by the scourge in plenitude of life, is presented head first, foreshortened in a violent and dramatic manner; near her a man (a naïvely horrible detail) holds his nose, not being able to endure the stench of

that beautiful body, scarcely cold and yet already decomposing.

This lugubrious poem is terminated by the end of the plague. The air has again become serene. A woman in the foreground has very beautiful shoulders, a vivacious whiteness of complexion instead of those bluish tints of that livid flesh which calls for chlorine and quicklime. The public health is restored. One can breathe without fear of swallowing poison, press a friendly hand without carrying a germ of death. The Republic, by the powerful intercession of Saint Roch, has secured from heaven a cessation of the scourge. All this upper group is adorably graceful. The saint, bowing at the feet of Jesus Christ and of the Virgin, implores with an ineffable ardor, and it is understood that celestial bounty cannot refuse anything to so fervent a prayer. The Republic, symbolized by a beautiful woman, in the style of Paul Veronese, has a very noble pose; it is regrettable that her hands do not correspond with the beauty of her head.

It is at the School of Saint Roch that the masterpiece of Tintoretto is to be found, that artist so fecund and so uneven, who goes from the sublime to the detestable with a wonderful facility. This immense picture represents on a grand scale all the bloody drama of Calvary. The sky, doubtless painted with the blue ash from Egypt which played such unpleasant tricks upon the artists of that period, has false and ambiguous tones, disagreeable to the eye, which were not present before the carbonization of that deceitful color, which has so oddly blackened the background of the "Pilgrims of Emmaus" of Paul Veronese; but this imperfection is quickly forgotten as the groups of the foreground victoriously take possession of the spectator after a few minutes of contemplation. The holy women form around the cross a trio in the deepest despair that human grief can dream of; one of them, entirely covered by her cloak, lies up-

on the ground and sobs in a most affecting abandonment to prostration.

A negro, in order to set up the cross of one of the thieves, stands on tiptoe with a contorted movement which lacks naturalness ; but he is painted like all the rest of the picture with a brush so vehement and furious that one cannot help admiring him. Never did Rubens, nor Rembrandt, nor Gesicault, nor Delacroix, in their most feverish and most turbulent sketches, attain such transport, such rage, such ferocity. This time Tintoretto has fully justified his name of "Robusti"; vigor could not go farther ; it is violent, exaggerated, melodramatic, but clothed with a supreme quality — strength.

This canvas, radiant with a sovereign art, ought to obtain pardon for the artist for those acres of blackened and smoky crusts which are encountered at every step in the palaces, churches, and galleries and which seem the work of a dyer rather than a painter. The Calvary bears the date of 1565.

Before leaving the *Scuola de San Rocco* a very beautiful Christ with a profoundly sorrowful expression, by Titian, must be noticed, and some charming altar doors, executed in 1765 by Philiberti, with exquisite delicacy and an astonishing perfection of detail. These sculptures, valuable in spite of their modern date, represent different episodes in the life of Saint Roch, the patron of the place. The cabinet-work of the upper hall is also very remarkable. But if we were to stop to admire everything, we would never be done.

In following our vagabond method let us regain the Grand Canal and give a few details concerning the Vendramin Calergi palace, now occupied by the Duchess de Berry. It is of a rich and noble architecture, probably by Pierre Lombard ; above the windows little genii support shields ornamented with exquisite taste, and give much elegance to that façade ; a garden of moderate ex-

tent containing a few trees lies at the side of the palace, which would in no way be distinguished from others were it not for the great white and blue mooring-posts which denote by the fleur-de-lis with which they are decorated the princely and quasi-royal abode.

When permission to visit the palace has been obtained, servants in green livery receive you very politely at the foot of the stair case, whose lower steps the water bathes, attach your gondola to the posts, and introduce you into a vestibule where you wait while the formalities of admission are being fulfilled.

This vestibule is as long as the palace; it comes out upon a sort of courtyard like those of our hotels. It is needful to remember that one is in Venice, in order not to expect to see an unharnessed carriage there or saddle-horses returning from the Bois.

Two gondolas laid up and a few pots of earth filled with little fir trees, and other poor plants dying of thirst, are all that adorn the nakedness of this vast waiting-chamber, which is to be found in all Venetian palaces — an ante-chamber which is at the same time a landing-place.

In the middle of this vestibule, on the left, a great staircase between two walls presents itself on which hang two cables of red silk, and where the same decoration of unhappy plants rules. A narrow carpet covers the steps and leads to an immense hall, like the vestibule, without furniture and without ornamentation. From there one enters the dining-room, the walls of which are covered with family portraits.

This room is in the form of a long square. It is very well lighted by two large balcony windows. An oval table occupies the middle and a screen hides the doorway. On the right hand wall the portrait of the Duchess of Burgundy is to be seen in a gown of blue velvet: those of the Count of Artois and of Madame the Princess



de Lamballe and some others are on the left-hand wall ; opposite is a portrait of Louis XV on foot ; and on each side of him his two daughters, Mesdames of France.

From this dining-room a hidden door opens into an obscure chapel, so small that it would with difficulty contain six persons. Four *prie-Dieu* may be counted in it. On the right, a large door gives access into an altogether modern salon, encumbered by paintings and a multitude of small pieces of furniture, such as English tables, Parisian chests, etc. — nothing of that charming useless luxury which recalls our native land by its beloved trivialities. Two portraits of her royal highness are placed on view : one by Lawrence, in a robe of white satin, with a rose at the side, displays the most ravishing little foot that could possibly be admired in a satin slipper. The entire back wall of this room is covered with those paintings which every one has seen at the expositions of the period, and which represent, for the most part, the heroes of La Vendée.

In retraversing the dining-room one enters by a door on the left into a salon which seems small in comparison with the preceding ones and which is perhaps overwhelmed by the sumptuous furniture which it contains. Thirty of the choicest pictures are hung here ; it is a sort of reception room or square salon, in which probably not a single one of the great names of painting is wanting. In the midst of these masterpieces shines a Virgin by Andrea del Sarto, of a beauty calculated to give chills to the most commonplace beholder, or to the Philistine encased in the hardest armor of prosaicism.

This salon, lighted by a soft daylight, seemed to us the favorite room, the very heart of the building, and we quitted it with regret to visit the famous room in which are those two columns of porphyry, the value of which is so great as to surpass that of the entire palace. They are placed in front of a door, are no more effective than

the lapis lazuli of the Salon Serra at Genoa, which might easily be believed to have been painted and varnished, and which resemble a metallic blue watered silk. They seemed imitations, although of the most incontestable genuineness.

There is one more salon which is not at all remarkable. In the four corners, four pedestals support four busts: those of the Duke of Berry, of Charles X, and other personages of the royal family. From this room communication is effected with the apartments of the Count Lucchesi-Palli, and the inspection is completed.

It would be dropping into commonplace philosophy to transcribe here the thoughts aroused by this visit to the Palace Vendramin-Calergi, the modest asylum of one who has been so very unfortunate. But this is not the first time Venice has had the privilege of sheltering dethroned royalties. Candide supped at an inn there in company with four monarchs out of work who had not the wherewithal to pay their scot.

From the Palace of the Duchess of Berry we went to the Palace Barbarigo, to see some celebrated Titians which are to be found there. Unfortunately the Russian consul had bought them for his master the Czar, and the precious collection was all under seal. We were obliged to content ourselves with some paintings of little value, and some gilded ceilings, in apartments which are very beautiful but in a sad state of dilapidation.

We were also shown a cradle overloaded with an extravagance of ornamentation, like the cradle of a long expected king's son; it was in this golden cradle that the eldest of the Barbarigo family slept. Now the cradle is empty; the Titians are departing for Russia; the rain filters through the gilding of the cracked ceilings, and the façade, grown musty through dampness and neglect, is about to fall into the green water of the canal.

We went forth from this palace with a sad heart.

There could be no more sorrowful sight than that of the cradle of an extinct family in a crumbling palace.

We also saluted, in going to the post-office to seek our letters from France, the humble abode of another fallen grandee, that of Manin, that hero equal to the greatest of antiquity. On the modest balcony of his apartments, at the corner of the Rue Paternian, some neglected pots of hyacinths were fading, and the dull windows had that melancholy aspect which houses assume whose soul has gone forth into exile, or to death, that eternal exile.



## CHAPTER XXV

### THE GHETTO — MURANO — VICENZA

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ONE day we wandered among the most hidden recesses of Venice, for we love to become acquainted with a city in other respects than those of its official physiognomy, outlined, described, narrated by every one, and we were curious, having paid the legitimate tribute of admiration, to raise that monumental mask which each city places upon its visage for the purpose of concealing its poverty and wretchedness.

Passing from lane to lane, by dint of crossing many bridges and often losing our way, we penetrated beyond the Canareggio, into a Venice not at all like the coquettish Venice of the water-colors. Houses half crumbled into dust, windows covered with boards, deserted Places, empty spaces where clothes were drying on lines and half-naked children were playing, arid beaches on which caulkers were repairing boats in thick clouds of smoke, churches abandoned and riddled by Austrian bombs, canals with dull, green water, on which were floating empty mattresses and the detritus of vegetables, forming an aggregation of poverty, of solitude, and neglect which conveyed a painful impression. Cities conquered from the sea, like Venice, have need of riches and splendor; all the luxury of art, all the magnificence of architecture are necessary to compensate for the absence of nature. If a Palace of the Scamozzi or the Sammichelli has a beautiful appearance on the border of the Grand Canal, with its balconies, its columns, and its marble staircases, nothing, on the other hand, is more sad than a ruin falling down between sky and water, the centipedes running and the crabs crawling over its musty feet.

We walked afterward several times through a dedalus of lanes which often led us back to our starting point. We noticed with surprise the absence of all religious emblems at the corners of the streets; there were no chapels, no Madonnas adorned with votive offerings, no sculptured crosses on the Places, no effigies of saints, not one of those signs of devotion so frequent in the other quarters of the city. Everything had a strange, sullen, and mysterious aspect. Weird and furtive figures glided silently along the walls with a timid air. These figures were not of the Venetian type. The curved noses, eyes like coals in the midst of a greenish pallor, slender jaws, pointed chins, all betokened a different race. The rags which covered them, scanty, pitiable, glazed with dirt, had a special sordidness and denoted cupidity rather than poverty, an avaricious misery, voluntary rather than submitted to, a thing to inspire disgust and not pity.

The lanes narrowed more and more; the houses towered like Babels of dog kennels placed one above another in order to seek a little respirable air and some light above the shadow and the mire in which these deformed beings grovelled.

Several of these houses were nine stories high, nine zones of rags, of ordure, and unclean industries. All the maladies and forgotten leprosies of the Orient seemed to be eating away these mangy walls; the dampness speckled them with black spots like those of gangrene; the rough-coating becoming exhausted like an eruptive skin, was dropping off in seury pellicles.

Not a single line preserved the perpendicular; everything was out of plumb; one story leaned inward and another bulged out; the bleared windows, blind in one eye, or squinting, did not possess a single whole pane. Plasters of paper dressed the wounds of the glass; hideously dirty mattresses were trying to dry in the sun on the ledge of the black and gaping casements.

In places, the remains of a coating of brick and broken plaster gave to a few of the façades, less decrepit than others, an unhealthy red color like that which covers the cheeks of a consumptive or of a painted courtesan of the lowest class. These were not the less ugly nor the less repulsive; it might be called health upon death, vice upon poverty. Which is the less horrible, a cadaver in all its lividness, or a cadaver whose face of yellow wax has been painted with vermilion?

Ruined bridges, bending their arched backs like old men broken with weight of years, and almost allowing their spans to fall in the water, bind together these masses of formless ruins, separated by stagnant canals black as ink, green as *sanies*, obstructed with filth and debris of all sorts, that the current has not the strength to carry off, powerless as it is to purify that sleeping water, opaque and dull, like that of a Stygian marsh or a pool of hell.

Finally we came out upon a quite extensive Campo, passably paved, in the middle of which yawned the mouth of a stone cistern. At one of the corners rose an edifice of a more human architectural aspect, the door of which was surmounted by an inscription sculptured in Oriental lettering, which we recognized as Hebrew characters. The mystery was explained. This fetid and purulent quarter, this aquatic Court of Miracles was indeed the Ghetto, the Jewry of Venice, which has preserved the characteristic sordidness of the Middle Ages.

Probably if one were to penetrate into those cracked and rotten houses streaked with filthy ooze, one would find there, even as in the ancient Jewrys, Rebeccas and Rachels of an orientally radiant beauty, rigid with gold and precious stones as a Hindoo idol, seated upon the most precious Smyrna rugs, in the midst of dishes of gold and of incalculable riches amassed by paternal avarice; for the poverty of the Jew is only on the outside.

If the Christian has a false luxury, the Israelite has a false poverty. Like certain insects, in order to escape his persecutors, he rolls himself in ordure and makes himself the color of dirt. This habit, formed in the Middle Ages when it was necessary, he has not yet lost, although nothing justifies it at present, and he continues in it with the indelible obstinacy of his race.

This edifice, decorated with a Hebrew inscription, was the synagogue. We entered it. A rather fine staircase led us into a great oblong hall of finely carved wood-work, carpeted with splendid red damask from India. The Talmud, like the Koran, forbids to its followers the reproduction of the human features and regards art as an idolatrous practice. The synagogue is perforce bare as a mosque or a Protestant temple, and cannot attain to the magnificence of the Catholic cathedrals, however great may be the riches of its faithful. This cult, altogether abstract, is poor to the eye; there is a chair for the Rabbi who expounds the Bible, a platform for the musicians who chant the psalms, a tabernacle in which are enclosed the Tables of the Law, and that is all.

We noticed, in this synagogue, a great number of brass candelabra with balls and twisted arms of a Dutch style, such as are often seen in the pictures of Gerard Dow or of Mieris, and notably in the picture of "The Paralytic," which the engraving has rendered popular. These candelabra probably came from Amsterdam, that northern Venice, which also contains many Jews. This abundance of lights ought not to occasion surprise, for candlesticks with seven branches, lamps, and tapers are frequently referred to in the Bible.

The cemetery of the Jews is at the Lido; the sand covers it; vegetation invades it, and the children have no scruples against dancing upon the overturned or fallen tombstones. Once when reproached for their irreverence, they replied altogether innocently, "These are Jews."

A Jew and a dog are similar objects in their eyes. These graves, for them, cover carrion, not corpses. This funereal field is not a cemetery, it is a common sewer. In Spain, at Puerto de Santa Maria, we heard an entirely analogous remark: a negro, a servant of the place, happened to be slain by a bull in a bull-fight; he was carried away and we were greatly disturbed. "Calm yourself," we heard a neighbor say, "it is nothing; that was a negro." Jews or negroes, they are men, for all that! How long will it still take for children and barbarians to learn the fact?

Nothing is more sad, more afflicting, and more heart-rending than this sandy ground all embossed with tumulary stones. These inscriptions, half effaced, in characters which one is unable to read, add still more to the air of mystery and neglect; one cannot give the dead who are sleeping underneath the satisfaction of hearing their names and their epitaphs spelled out.

This cemetery reminded us of an Arab burial-place near Oran. It was on a stony hillock, frightfully arid, swept by the winds from the sea, burned by the sun, and across which one might pass without paying more attention to the fallen tombstones than to the stones in the road.

The Christians themselves sleep more peacefully in the little isle of San Michieli, on the road to Murano; they are laid to rest under the briny sand which ought to be soft for the bones of a Venetian, and the gondoliers in passing salute the crosses placed above their graves.

Murano has greatly declined and fallen away from its ancient splendor; it is no longer, as in the old days, the magician of the false pearls and of glassware of all kinds. Chemistry has exposed its secrets; it has no longer the monopoly of those fine bevelled mirrors, those great glasses with feet of filigree-work, those crystal balls which seem like a tear of the sea, congealed upon the delicate vegetation of the ocean. Bohemia also does fine



work of this kind, Choisy le Roi does better. Art at Murano has remained stationary in the midst of universal progress elsewhere.

Murano contains a curiosity which we beheld with a certain feeling of pride: a horse, an animal which is more chimerical in Venice than the unicorn, the griffin, the flying goats, or the nightmare. Richard III in Venice would cry in vain "My kingdom for a horse!" It gave us great pleasure to see this honest quadruped, whose existence we had almost forgotten.

The encounter with this animal gave us a sort of homesickness for terra firma, and we returned to Venice altogether a dreamer. It seems to us that a long time had elapsed since we had seen plains, mountains, cultivated fields, roads bordered with trees, streets traversed by carriages, and we thought nothing could be more pleasant for us than to hear the cracking of whips of a stage-coach. But a visit to the Gorrer museum, where among hundreds of other curiosities is preserved the board on which the marvelous map of Venice was carved by Albert Dürer, to the Palace Manfrini, which contains a rich collection of Venetian masters, and to various dealers in bric-a-brac, ossuaries in which are deposited the ancient magnificences of the Republic, speedily dissipated those continental and rural longings.

Another little incident retarded our willingness to depart. One morning while we were bargaining in the shop of a goldsmith of the *Frezzaria* for one of those little charms of gold strands fine as hairs, and which we wished to carry away as a souvenir of travel for one of our lady friends in Paris, we saw a beautiful young girl enter, negligently draped in a large shawl striped with brilliant colors, and which was, to speak truly, her only article of clothing, for she had underneath it only her chemisette and a white petticoat, a circumstance, however, not at all extraordinary in Venice. If her toilet was scanty,

her beautiful glossy black hair, coiled with care, made her a charming coiffure for a ball, with nothing lacking, not even the flower stuck at the corner of her ear. She approached the show-case and chose a silver ring which she had doubtless coveted for some days.

The merchant put a price upon it which seemed to her exorbitant, and in fact it was so, considering the slight value of the article, and which caused her to fly into the most diverting fit of rage imaginable. All rosy with indignation, she heaped invectives upon the merchant in that soft Venetian patois that we were beginning to understand, and which could not lose its charm, even in a quarrel. She called the honest goldsmith Jew, rascal, forger, and great dog of the Madonna, a gross insult in Italy. The merchant laughed and stuck to his price, without being influenced by the pretty bombardment of invectives which he provoked in order to amuse us, and which we put a stop to by causing the ring to be charged to our account, on condition that Vicenza, which was the girl's name, would allow us to make a sketch of her.

Beautiful girls in Venice, however odd it may seem in a city so filled with painters, consent much more readily to be your mistress than to be your model; they understand love better than art, and believe themselves pretty enough for one to drop crayons and palettes as soon as one sees them. According to their idea only the ugly ought to pose. A singular theory, but which is explained, however, by their ingenuous and fiery imaginations. They do not imagine that a young man can coldly copy their beauty, and cast upon it that analytical and scrutatory gaze which metamorphoses the living flesh into marble. These ideas may perhaps furnish the reason for the unique type of woman employed by every Italian master.

La Vicenza, who, in any other respect would surely

have shown herself more accommodating, made many difficulties, but finally agreed to come to pose for us, accompanied by one of her friends, an ancient dansense of the Fenice. To speak the truth she had no faith in our sketch, and flattered herself upon a more gallant rendezvous; her incredulity ceased only when she saw us open our box of paints, arrange our paper and our pencils.

Vicenza afforded a brown variety of Venetian beauty which is not met with in the pictures of the old masters, altogether devoted to the blonde type, the only one which they represented. She had a skin of an incredible fineness, an amber paleness, black eyes, nocturnal and velvety, red lips, and an expression at the same time sweet and untamed.

All the while she was posing she bit and chewed the roses which she plucked from her bouquet, took off and put on her ring, made her slipper dance on her toe, and got up from her chair every minute in order to come and look over our shoulder at the work which was going on. We had great difficulty in getting her to return to her place and put herself in position.

At last the portrait was finished, good or bad; she was satisfied with it and took it to give to her lover. But we preserved a copy, which suffices to prove, in spite of Paul Veronese, of Giorgione, of Titian and their golden-haired women, that there has been at least one pretty brunette in Venice.



## CHAPTER XXVI

### DETAILS OF HABITS AND CUSTOMS

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THE season was advancing. Our sojourn in Venice was prolonged beyond the limits which we had fixed in the general plan for our journey. We delayed our departure from week to week, from day to day, and we always found some good reason for remaining. In vain did light fogs begin to hover in the morning over the lagune. In vain did a sudden shower force us to take refuge under the arcades of the Procuraties or the portico of a church ; in vain when we wandered in the light of the moon on the Grand Canal did the cold night-air sometimes oblige us to raise the glass of the gondola and to let fall the black cloth of the *felce*. We turned a deaf ear to the warnings of autumn.

We always recollected a palace, a church, or a picture which we had not seen. It was, in fact, necessary before quitting Venice to visit that white church of Santa Maria Formosa, made famous by the celebrated "Sainte Barbe," so superbly beautiful, of Palma the elder ; that Palace of Bianca Capello, to which are attached memories of an amorous legend altogether Venetian and full of a romantic charm, not even destroyed by the sign of a French modiste, Madam Adele Torchere, who sells bonnets and hats in the room in which, leaning from the balcony, the beautiful creature was wont to dream ; and that superb and odd church of San Zaccaria, in which is to be found a wonderful altar picture, all glittering with gold, by Antonio Vivarini, given by Helene Foscari and Marino Donato, and also the tomb of that great sculptor, Alexander Vittoria,

*Qui rivens viros durit de marmore vultus,*

a magnificent conceit for an epitaph, which is justified on this occasion by a host of statues.

Then there is something else, a forgotten isle, Mazorbo or Torcello, where there is a curious Byzantine basilica and some Roman remains; then a picturesque façade upon a little-frequented canal, of which a sketch must be made; a thousand *motifs* of this kind, all reasonable, all excellent, but which were not the real ones, although we made ourselves believe them to be true. We yielded in spite of ourselves to that melancholy which seizes the heart of the most determined traveler at the moment he is about to place himself at a distance, perhaps forever, from a long-desired country, from a place in which he has passed many charming days and beautiful nights.

There are certain cities from which one separates himself as from a beloved mistress, with heaving breast and eyes filled with tears, a species of chosen fatherland where one is more easily made happy than elsewhere, and to which one dreams of returning to die, and which appear to you in the midst of the sorrows and perplexities of life like an oasis, an Eldorado, a divine city to which ennui has no access. Grenada was one of these heavenly Jerusalems for us, shining under a golden sun in the distant azures of the mirage. We had thought of it since the days of our childhood; we quitted it with tears and often think of it with regret. Venice will be for us another Grenada, perhaps even more regretted.

Has it ever happened to you to have but a few more days to spend with a beloved one? One gazes at him long, fixedly, sorrowfully, in order thoroughly to engrave his features upon the memory; one saturates oneself with his looks, one studies him under all his aspects, one notes his little peculiarities, the mole near the mouth, the dimple in the cheek or hand; one notes the inflec-

tions of his voice, one endeavors to preserve as much as possible of that beloved countenance which absence is about to tear away from you, and which you will no longer be able to behold save in your heart; one does not leave his side but wishes to take advantage of the remaining time up to the end of the last minute; even sleep seems to you to lend wings to the precious hours, and interminable excuses are made for holding his hand fast in yours without your noticing that the stars have begun to fade and that the blue morning light is beginning to filter through the curtains.

We experienced this feeling in regard to Venice. In proportion to the approach of the moment for our departure, the more dear it became to us. Its preciousness was revealed at the moment we were to lose it. We reproached ourselves with having made a poor use of the time of our sojourn, and bitterly regretted some hours of idleness, some lazy concessions to the enervating influences of the sirocco. It seemed to us that we might have seen more, taken more notes, made more sketches; and yet we had fully filled our rôle of traveler, God knows; we were only to be met with in churches, galleries, at the Academy of Fine Arts, on the Place Saint Mark, at the Palace of the Doges, at the Library. Our overworked gondoliers begged for mercy: we scarcely took time to swallow our ice at the Café Florian, a soup of sea-louse and some polenta at the Gasthof San Gallo or at the tavern of the Black Hat. In six weeks we had worn out three pairs of eyeglasses, ruined a pair of opera-glasses, lost a telescope. Never before did any one surrender himself to such a debauch of the eye. We gazed fourteen hours each day without stopping. If we had dared we would have continued our inspections with torches.

The last few days this became a veritable fever. We made a general tour of recapitulation over our

course, with that clear and ready glance of the man who knows the thing he is looking for and goes straight to the objects he is in search of. We revisited that fine Ducal Palace which was specially adapted for the scenery of a drama or opera, with its great rosy walls, its white trimmings, its two stories of columnettes, its Arabian trefoils; that huge Saint Mark's, the San Sophia of the Occident, colossal reliquary of departed civilizations, cavern of gold encrusted with mosaics, immense aggregation of jasper, porphyry, antique fragments, cathedral of pirates enriched by the spoils of the universe; that Campanile which carries so high in air that golden angel, the protector of Venice, and guards at its feet the little cell of Sansovino, carved like a jewel; that tower of *l'Horloge*, all of gold and ultramarine, where on a large dial the black and white hours air themselves; that Library of an elegance wholly Athenian, crowned by *svelte* mythological statues, laughing memory of neighboring Greece; and that Grand Canal, bordered by a double row of palaces, Gothic, Moorish, Renaissance, rococo, whose wholly different façades excite wonder by the inexhaustible fancifulness and perpetual invention of their details, for the study of which man's single existence would not suffice; that splendid gallery wherein is displayed the genius of Sansovino, of Scamozzi, of Pierre Lombard, of Palladio, of Longhena, of Bergamasco, of Rossi, of Tremignan and other wonderful architects, without counting the unknown, the humble workmen of the Middle Ages, who are not the less to be admired.

We wandered about in our gondola from the point of the customhouse to the point of Quintavalle in order to fix forever in our mind that fairy spectacle which painting as well as words is powerless to render, and we devoured, with a despairing attention, that mirage of *fata morgana*, about to vanish forever for us.

Now, at the moment of putting an end to these already too lengthy narrations, of which the impatient reader will have rapidly turned over the leaves, it seems to us that we have said nothing, that we have but feebly expressed our enthusiasm, and badly copied our superb models. Each monument, each church, each gallery should have had a volume, and, moreover, we have spoken only of what is visible ; we refrained from shaking off the dust from old chronicles, from reviving extinct memories and repeopling with their former inhabitants the deserted palaces ; for that would be the task for an entire lifetime and we have been obliged to content ourselves with drawing on our paper simple photographs which have no other merit than their sincerity.

The temptation often seized us to detach from their frames the patricians and grandees of Titian, of Bonifazio, and Paris Bordone, and to make descend from their sculptured frames the beautiful women of Giorgione, of Paul Veronese, with their brocaded robes, their golden hair, in order to animate that scenery preserved intact and to which only the actors are wanting. The magic names of Dandolo, of Foscari, of Loredano, of Marino Faliero, of Queen Cornaro, have more than once excited our imagination. But we prudently resisted it. What good end would be attained by making over admirable poems into prose ?

Our task was a more humble one. In reading the accounts of travelers, we were seized with a desire for more precise, intimate details, details more drawn from life, more circumstantial statements in regard to those thousand petty differences which call one's attention to the fact that one has changed one's country. General statements in pompous style, historical criticisms more or less correct, tell us what we know already and give us little information as to the shape of the hats, the cut of the



gowns, the quality and name of the viands, in this or that city. We have taken our booty of all this sort of thing and described the houses, the wine-shops, the streets, the wharves, the handbills of the theatre, the marionettes, the Chinese puppet shows, the cafés, the wandering musicians, the children, the old men and young girls, everything that is ordinarily disdained.

Is it not as interesting to know how a Venetian grissette dresses her hair and how her shawl is folded upon her shoulders, as to hear recounted for the hundredth time the beheading of the Doge Marino Faliero on the Staircase of the Giants, which (by way of parenthesis) was only built a century or two after his death? Do you think it is a matter of indifference to learn whether the coffee is filtered or boiled, in the Oriental fashion, at the Florian and the Costanza? Does not this little fact of the thick Turkish coffee tell all the past of Venice? And if we have stupidly copied here a list of names collected from the sign-boards and the walls, the peculiar physiognomy of which announces that we are in neither Paris nor London, such names as Ermagora, Zamora Fagozzo, Zanobrio, Dario, Paternian, Farsetti, Erizzo, Mangile Valmarana, Zorzi, Condulmer, Valcamonica, Corner Zaguri, etc., will you not be amused and pleased by the euphony and appearance of these names so local, so romantic, so flowing and so soft to the ear? Will not this litany bring to you an echo of the Venetian harmony?

We are still far from having carried out this program. Architecture has often tempted us and we have often abused, in spite of the precepts of Boileau, the astragal and the festoon. The street and its sights always new has many times prevented us from entering the houses, something not always easy for the traveler, that skimming swallow who arrives with the pleasant season and flies away with it. The morals of Venetian society do

not perhaps occupy a sufficient place in these sketches, and in them the picture has often taken precedence over the man. But in this age of hypocrisy and of cant one has not the joyous liberty of the President des Brosses, and it is difficult to speak of morals without being immoral.

To narrate one's own adventures is foolishness ; to narrate those of others is to be guilty of an indiscretion. Can one, moreover, betray the secret of the intimacies into which one has been cordially admitted, and repeat in a book that which has been whispered in one's ear ? The exterior forms of life to-day are almost everywhere exactly alike, especially in good society. Is it necessary to state that the *cicisbeos* no longer exist and that the Venetian women have lovers, like the women of Paris, London, or any other place ? If a more local observation is desired, let us add that they often have one, but rarely two, a feature of morals which can be extended to cover the whole of Italy ; on the other hand, it is not considered good taste for this lover to be an Austrian ; that is a method of resisting oppression and of isolating the enemy.

The ancient ruined families live in retirement and poorly, and the owner of a palace dines in a room covered with paintings by great masters, on a dish of polenta, of fried fish, or shell-fish, which a single valet has procured from the tavern.

The summer is spent in the country in country-houses festooned with vines, on the borders of the Brenta, in the little farms of Friulia. Venice is only returned to in winter, which is a custom equally practiced in Paris. The patricians who no longer have country-houses, and cannot for want of means travel upon the mainland, cloister themselves during the entire season and only reappear at the period when it is permissible to frequent the Place Saint Mark. There

are exceptions to all this, naturally. There are Venetian women without lovers and some wealthy Venetians. The contrary of what we have stated is also true. Festivals, balls, dinners, are rare. The fear of spies and informers makes this society very reserved. One only amuses oneself in private and in company with confidential friends. This makes the observation of habits and customs difficult for a traveler.

Perhaps those who have been so kind as to read what we have written will have reproached us for the myriad names of artists gathered as if at random. It certainly was not for the purpose of parading a vain erudition; the Venetian school is of a richness so fabulous that our prolixity even seems to us like the brevity of ingratitude. The genealogical tree of art has branches so luxuriant, so loaded with fruit in this fertile city, that it is as difficult to follow its ramifications as those of the genealogical tree of the Virgin in the Cathedral of Saint Mark; there are only kings, saints, patriarchs, and prophets.

On this side and that of the four great names which personify Venetian art,—Giorgione, Titian, Paul Veronese, Tintoretto,—there are entire families of admirable painters. From Antoine de Murano to Tiepolo, with whom the race became extinct, a book of gold of a thousand leaves would be necessary in which to write those unknown names which deserve to be made glorious. The least of these artists would be considered a great genius to-day.

In giving an account of the Academy of Fine Arts, we expressed all our admiration for that marvelous Gothic school of the Vivarini, the Basaiti, the Carpaccio, and Gentil Bellin, which to all the feeling of Andrea Mantegna of Perugino and of Albert Dürer, joins a coloring to which Giorgione already is hastening. But among the painters of the Decadence, who begin with

the death of Titian, what fecundity, what facility, what spirit and color !

To write their names here would awaken no idea ; it would be necessary to add to them an analysis of their immense work, to characterize their various styles, to reconstruct their biography. It is a work which we shall perhaps perform and to which we have often been tempted ; but a residence of ten years in Venice would be necessary for its accomplishment. That is what would determine us to undertake it. They have wholly covered with paintings and frescoes churches and palaces ; they have taken advantage of the least vacant space left by Tintoretto.

What is not generally known is that Venice is crowded with sculptures, bas-reliefs, figures of marble and of bronze of the rarest merit, works of sculptors equal to its painters, and who are never spoken of, we know not why. We have named a few of these artists ; but whoever should insist upon a complete list would have to read a tremendously long litany. How capricious is human glory ! Who speaks now of Vittoria, of Aspetti, of Leopardo, of Sansovino, and so many other sculptors ?







*PADUA*

*Palace of the Royal University*





## CHAPTER XXVII

### PADUA

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**N**OW, although it cuts like a knife, we must depart. Padua, the city of Ezzelin and Angelo, calls us. Farewell, dear Campo San Mose, where we have passed so many happy hours; farewell, sunsets behind la Salute, moonlight effects on the Grand Canal, the beautiful blonde girls of the Public Gardens, the gay dinners under the arbor at Quintavalle; farewell, fine art and splendid painting, romantic palaces of the Middle Ages, and Greek façades of Palladio; farewell, turtle-doves of Saint Mark's; farewell, gulls of the lagune, sea-baths on the beach at the Lido, excursions in the gondolas; farewell, Venice, and if it be forever, farewell! as said Lord Byron of disdainful visage.

The railway carries us away, and already the Venus of the Adriatic has replunged her white and rosy body under the azure of the sea.

To leave a gondola to climb into a railway train is a discordant action. Those two words do not seem fitted to find themselves side by side. The one expresses the romanticism of recollections, the other the prosaicism of reality.

Zorzi de Cataro brusquely delivers you over to Stephenson. You were in Venice and here you are in England or America. O Titian! O Paul Veronese! who could have believed that one day your turquoise sky would be soiled by British coal, and that the azure of your lagunes would reflect the arches of a viaduct! So goes the world; but here the contrast is more perceptible, for the forms of bygone ages are preserved intact, and the Present lives in the skin of the Past.

We had already passed over this road, but in the opposite direction, from Verona to Venice. A storm breaking upon us with thunder, lightning, and rain showed us under a specially wild and fantastic aspect that country which, seen in ordinary weather, offers to view a succession of well-cultivated fields, intersected by canals, garlanded with vines running joyously from one tree to another, pretty prospects serrated with blue hill-sides, strewn with villas whose whiteness stands out upon the green of the gardens.

We had with us in the carriage two or three monks of quite pleasant appearance, and some young abbés, tall and thin, with oval heads, of that pallor and dead tone dear to the Italian masters, and who resembled Gothic angels of Fiesole, their nimbus of gold replaced by a three-cornered hat. One of them recalled exactly the portrait of Raphael; but the dulled eye had no sparkle, and the mouth opened vaguely in a silly smile; but for that it would have been possessed of a perfect beauty. The sight of these Seminarists made us reflect that in France the adolescent does not exist. That charming transition from childhood to youth is wholly wanting with us. Between the hideous schoolboy, with big red hands and ill-formed figure, and the jolly dog who shaves himself or wears a beard, there is nothing at all. The Greek *epchebe*, the Algerian *yalouled*, the Italian *ragazzo*, the Spanish *muchacho*, fill up, with their young charm and their still uncertain beauty, the gap which separates the child from the man. It would be interesting to discover why we are deprived of that shade; for there are some handsome English adolescents, a trifle boobyish, by reason of the jacket and sailors' trousers which they are condemned to wear.

In pondering over this problem of physiology, we arrived at the station; ten leagues are soon devoured, even upon an Italian railway. There a crowd of raga-

muffins and cabmen awaited our descent, with yells and ferocious gesticulations; they quarreled among themselves over the travelers and the baggage, as formerly the "coucou" cabmen on the Place de la Concorde, or the "robeiroon" of Avignon on the Quay du Rhone. One takes you by the arm, another by the leg. You are lifted from the ground, and if you are not sufficiently muscular to calm that ardor by some vigorous raps, you run a risk of being quartered like a regicide and drawn by four street porters.

A score of open carriages, cabriolets, berlingots and other vehicles were stationed at the gate of the station. This surprised us and we were rejoiced once more to behold horses and carriages. It had been almost two months, if the horse at Murano be excepted, since that had happened to us.

We hired an open carriage to take us and our trunk as far as Padua, which is a short distance from the railway. Unaccustomed as we had become to all tumult of this kind through familiarity with the silent locomotion of Venice, the hubbub of wheels and stamping of the horses were deafening to us and almost insupportable; several days were necessary to accustom us to it.

Padua is an ancient city and exhibits a rather respectable appearance against the horizon with its bell-turrets, its domes, and its old walls upon which myriads of lizards run and frisk in the sun. Situated near a centre which attracts life to itself, Padua is a dead city with an almost deserted air. Its streets, bordered by two rows of low arcades, in nowise recall the elegant and charming architecture of Venice. The heavy, massive structures have a serious, somewhat crabbed aspect, and its somber porticos in the lower stories of the houses resemble black mouths which yawn with ennui.

We were conducted to a big inn, established probably in some ancient palace, and whose great halls, dishon-

ored by vulgar uses, had formerly seen better company. It was a real journey to go from the vestibule to our room by a host of stairways and corridors; a map or Ariadne's thread would have been needed to find one's way back.

Our windows opened upon a very pleasant view; a river flows at the foot of the wall, — the Brenta or the Baccigligione, I know not which, for both water Padua. The banks of this watercourse were adorned with old houses and long walls, and trees, too, overhung the banks; some rather picturesque rows of piles, from which the fishermen cast their lines with that patience characteristic of them in all countries; huts with nets and linen hanging from the windows to dry, formed under the sun's rays a very pretty subject for a water-color.

After dinner we went to the Café Pedrocchi, celebrated throughout all Italy for its magnificence. Nothing could be more monumentally classic. There are nothing but pillars, columnettes, ovolos, and palm leaves of the Perier and Fountain kind, the whole very fine and lavish of marble. What was most curious was some immense maps forming a tapestry and representing the different divisions of the world on an enormous scale. This somewhat pedantic decoration gives to the hall an academic air; and one is surprised not to see a chair in place of the bar, with a professor in his gown in place of a dispenser of lemonade.

The University of Padua was formerly famous. In the thirteenth century eighteen thousand young men, a whole people of scholars, followed the lessons of the learned professors, among whom later Galileo figured, one of whose bones is preserved there as a relic, a relic of a martyr who suffered for the truth. The façade of the University is very beautiful; four Doric columns give it a severe and monumental air; but solitude reigns in the

class-rooms where to-day scarcely a thousand students can be reckoned.

The bulletin of the theatre announced the "Barber of Seville," by Rossini, and a ballet; occupation for our evening was found.

The hall was very simple; the scenery seemed as though painted by a glazier in merry mood and recalled those *comédies* in pasteboard with which children amuse themselves. But the actors had fresh voices and that natural aptitude which characterizes the poorest Italian singers. The Rosine was young and charming and the Basil recalled Tamburini by the profundity of his base. The air of the "*Calumny*" was as well sung as would have been looked for in a theatre of the first rank.

But that which was really strange was the ballet, composed in a fossil and antediluvian style that was extremely entertaining. We saw ourselves carried back as though by magic to the good days of the classic melodrama, to the pure school of Guilbert de Pixiricourt and of Caigniez; the scenery recalled the *Aqueducs de Cosenza Roberit*, *chef de brigands*, the *Pont du Torrent*, and other masterpieces forgotten by the present generation. It was a story of a traveler lost in the woods, of a cut-throat inn, of a tender-hearted young girl, and of bandits habited like Cossacks, with immense red pantaloons, formidable beards, and an arsenal of cutlasses and of pistols in their girdles, the whole interspersed with dances and combats with the sabre and the axe, as in the most glorious days of the Funambules.

A handsome officer went through those horrible adventures with the heroism required of every young leading man, followed by the inevitable Jocrisse. But, singular fancy, this Jocrisse was a soldier of the Old Guard, clothed in a uniform in tatters, adorned with a red nose issuing from a brushwood of mustache and gray whiskers. The absurdity of the thing was in the perpetual

fright of the soldier of the Old Guard who was frantic with terror and cowardice, and whose teeth chattered at the least rustling of leaves. To make of this type of bravery an ideal of poltroonry, to represent a soldier of the *Grande Armée* as possessed of the fears of Pierrot of the pantomimes, seemed to us as a hazardous notion and in detestable taste.

The following day we paid a visit to the Cathedral dedicated to Saint Anthony, who enjoys at Padua the same reputation as Saint Januarius at Naples. He is the *genius loci*, the Saint venerated above all others. He used to perform not less than thirty miracles each day, if Casanova is to be believed. Such a performance fairly earned for him his surname of Thaumaturge, but this prodigious zeal has fallen off greatly. Nevertheless, the reputation of the Saint has not suffered, and so many masses are paid for at his altar that the number of the priests of the Cathedral and of days in the year are not sufficient. To liquidate the accounts, the Pope has granted permission, at the end of the year, for masses to be said, each one of which is of the value of a thousand; in this fashion Saint Anthony is saved from being bankrupt to his faithful devotees.

On the Place which adjoins the Cathedral, a beautiful equestrian statue by Donatello, in bronze, rises to view, the first which had been cast since the days of antiquity, representing a leader of banditti: Gattamelata, a brigand who surely did not deserve that honor. But the artist has given him a superb bearing and a spirited figure with his baton of a Roman emperor, and it is entirely sufficient.

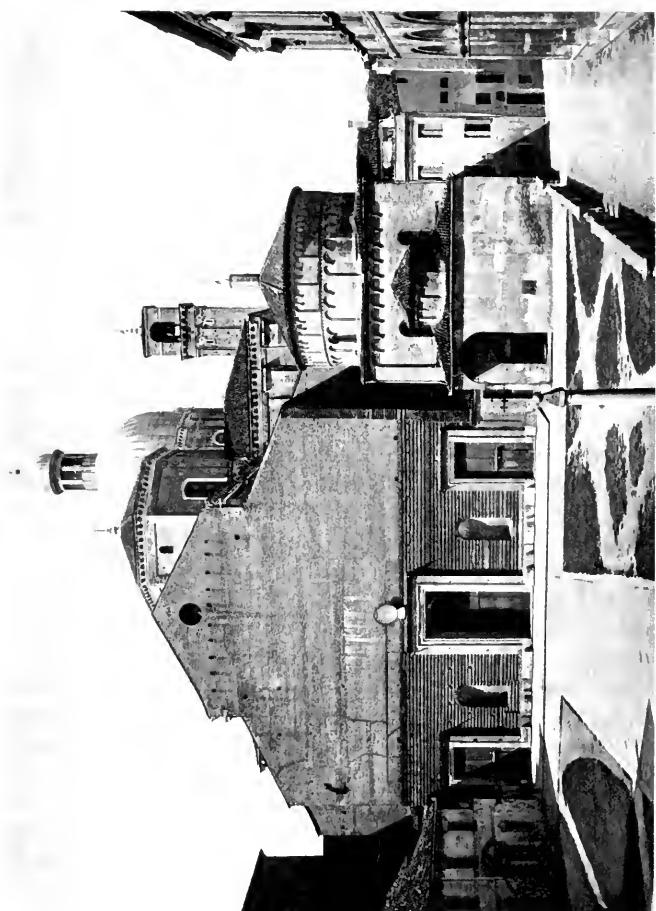
The Church of Saint Anthony is composed of an aggregation of cupolas and bell-turrets and of a great brick façade, with triangular pediment, beneath which runs a gallery with ogives and columns; three small doors, pierced in the lofty arches correspond to the three naves.

*PADUA*

*Cathedral. (By And. della Valle, Righetti, etc.)*









The interior is excessively rich, encumbered with chapels and tombs in various styles. Specimens of the art of all periods are to be seen there, from the innocent, religious, and delicate art of the Middle Ages to the most irregular fantasies of rococo ornamentation.

The cloister attached to the church is paved with gravestones, and its walls have disappeared under the sepulchral monuments with which they are covered; we read a number of epitaphs, which were very fine. The Italians have preserved from their ancestors the secret of lapidary Latin.

Saint Justine is an enormous church with a bare façade and an interior architecture of a poor and wearisome sobriety. Good taste is necessary, but not too much, and we still prefer the mild exuberance of the rococo to niggardliness. A fine altar picture by Paul Veronese relieves this poverty. If the church is flat and characterless, one cannot say the same of two gigantic monsters which guard it, lying upon the stairway like faithful dogs. Never did Japanese chimera wear a more fearful and terrible aspect than these fantastic animals, a species of hideous griffins, with the hind quarters of the lion, eagles' wings, stupid and ferocious head, terminated by a hooked beak pierced by oblique nostrils like those of a turtle. These monstrous beasts hold pressed against their breasts, between their claws, a warrior on horseback, caparisoned in armor of the Middle Ages, whom they crush with a slow pressure, vaguely gazing at him all the while, like the cow of which Victor Hugo speaks, without otherwise disquieting themselves with the convulsive struggles of the crushed warrior.

What does this cavalier taken with his mount in the clutches of these cowering monsters signify? What myth lies hidden under this sombre sculptural fantasy? Do these groups illustrate some legend, or are they simply the sinister hieroglyphics of fatality? We admit we

cannot conjecture, and we have found no one able or willing to explain the matter for us. The other day, while turning over the leaves of an album which Prince Soltykoff brought with him from India, we found in the propylæum of a Hindoo pagoda identical monsters, also crushing a man against their breasts.

Whatever the meaning of these terrifying groups may be, one confusedly divines in them vague memories of cosmogonic antagonisms and of struggles between the two principles of good and evil; it is Ahriman, vanquisher of Ormuzd, or Siva overthrowing Vishnu. Later, under the portico of the Cathedral of Ferrara, we saw two of these chimeras who this time were crushing lions.

One thing which must not be neglected in passing through Padua is a visit to the old Church of the Arena, situated at the rear of a garden of luxuriant vegetation, where it would certainly not be conjectured to be located unless one were advised of the fact.

The church is entirely painted in its interior by Giotto. Not a single column, not a single rib, nor architectural division interrupts that vast tapestry of frescoes. The general aspect is soft, azure, starry, like a beautiful, calm sky; ultramarine dominates; thirty compartments of large dimensions, indicated by simple lines, contain the life of the Virgin and of her Divine Son in all their details; they might be called illustrations in miniature of a gigantic missal. The personages, by naïve anachronisms very precious for history, are clothed in the mode of the times in which Giotto painted.

Below these compositions of the purest religious feeling, a painted plinth shows the seven deadly sins symbolized in an ingenious manner, and other allegorical figures of a very good style; a Paradise and a Hell, subjects which greatly impressed the minds of the artists of that epoch, complete this marvelous whole. There

are in these paintings weird and touching details ; children issue from their little coffins to mount to Paradise with a joyous ardor, and launch themselves forth to go to play upon the blossoming turf of the celestial garden ; others stretch forth their hands to their half-resurrected mothers. The remark may also be made that all the devils and vices are obese, while the angels and virtues are thin and slender. The painter wishes to mark the preponderance of matter in the one class and of spirit in the other.

We ought to note here a picturesque and physiological peculiarity. The Paduan type differs greatly from that of the Venetians, in spite of the fact that the two cities are near neighbors : the beauty of the Paduans is more severe and more classic ; thick brown hair, decided eyebrows, a dark and serious countenance, a complexion of an olive paleness, recall the prominent features of the Lombard race ; the black *baïtte* in which these pretty girls frame their countenances, gives them, as they walk in silence along the deserted arcades, a proud and haughty air which contrasts with the vague smile and facile grace of the Venetians.

See, in addition, on the Piazza Salone, the Palace of Justice, a vast edifice in the Moorish style, with galleries, columnettes, serrated battlements, which contains what is perhaps the largest hall in the world, and recalls the architecture of the Ducal Palace at Venice ; at the *Seuola del Santo*, some glorious frescos by Titian, the only ones known of that painter, and you will have no great regret in leaving Padua.

Instruments of torture are still exhibited there, wooden horses, strappados, pincers, tongs, boots, toothed wheels, saws, chopping knives, which were used by Ezzelin, upon his victims, the most famous tyrant that ever lived, and compared with whom Angelo was an angel of mildness.

We had a letter to the keeper of this weird collection, made for a museum of an executioner. We did not find him, to our great regret, and we departed the same evening for Rovigo, tearing ourselves away with difficulty from that soft Lombardo-Venetian realm, to which nothing is wanting, alas ! except liberty !







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*FERRARA*

*View from the Bell-Tower of Saint Benedict*

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### FERRARA

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**A**N omnibus took us in a few hours from Padua to Rovigo, where we arrived that evening. While waiting for our supper, we wandered about the streets of the city, lighted by a clear silvery moon which permitted us to discern the silhouettes of the monuments. Low arcades like those of the old Palais Royal at Paris extend along the streets, and with their alternations of light and shade form long cloisters which recalled that evening the effect of the scenery of the act in which the nuns appear in *Robert le Diable*.

Rare passers-by filed along silently like ghosts; some plaintive dogs bayed at the moon, and the town seemed already asleep; all the windows were dark, with the exception of a few lighted cafés, in which the habitués, with a wearied and somnolent air, were consuming ices, a *demi-tasse*, or a glass of water in little spoonfuls, by slow sips, sagely, methodically, stopping often to read an insignificant article in the censored *Diario*, like people who have many hours to spare and are trying to reach the time for going to bed.

The next morning, at daybreak, we were obliged to climb into a species of van, a cross between the French "patache" and Valencian "tartane." Delicate travelers could furnish a pathetic elegy upon the uncomfor-  
-tableness of these vehicles; but Spanish post-riding in a cart over the most abominable roads in the world have rendered us very philosophical in regard to these little inconveniences. Moreover, those who wish to have every comfort to which they are accustomed, have only to remain at home. One of Erter's coupés rolling over

the macadam of the Champs-Élysées is infinitely easier, and it is indisputably true that one dines better at the café of the Provençaux Brothers than at the wayside hostelries.

The road from Rovigo to Ferrara has nothing very picturesque about it: flat lands, cultivated fields, trees of the North, — one might believe himself in a Department of France.

One crosses the Po which rolls along with yellow tides, and whose low and treeless banks vaguely recall those of the Guadalquivir below Seville. The impetuous Eridan, deprived of its tributes from the melting of snow, had at the moment a quite calm and debonnaire aspect.

The Po separates the Romagna from the Lombardo-Venetian States, and the customs officials await you on leaving the ferry-boat. The Italian customhouses in general and their interminable vexations are very much complained of. We must avow that they have always passed our slender baggage with less over-scrupulousness, certainly, than we would have experienced on a like occasion in many French customhouses; it is true that we have always handed over our keys carelessly with a gracious air and displayed our passport on every occasion that it has been requested with the celerity and politeness of Pacelot the monkey.

The Romagnole customhouse people, after having negligently rumpled our shirts and socks and seeing that we were not transporting any other literature than a Richard guide-book, a book which is superlatively benign and little subversive of established order, closed our trunk with magnanimity and in the mildest manner permitted us to continue our journey.

We had with us in the carriage two quite aged priests, heavy, fat, short, with oily yellow complexions, shaved beards whose bluish tints showed as far as the cheek-bones and who wore without being aware of it

the costume of the Basil of Beaumarchais. With us the ecclesiastical costume has almost disappeared. Priests in France secularize themselves as much as they are able ; very seldom, since the Revolutions of July and February, do they wear the soutane openly upon the street. A hat with wide brim, black coat of antique cut, with long skirts, a cloak of sombre hue, compose for them a mixed costume between that of religion and of the world which nearly resembles that of a Quaker or of a serious man who has renounced elegancies of dress. They are only priests furtively, and it is only in church that they clothe themselves in the sacerdotal insignia.

In Italy, on the contrary, they strut around in their real character, taking the right of way, and feeling at home everywhere, blow their noses and cough noisily, in the manner of persons to whom all respect is due and who have nothing to embarrass them.

Those of whom we are speaking took the best seats in the carriage, which we yielded to them with the deference which their age and condition deserved, and they spread themselves out expansively, very much as though they would have usurped the seats without the least word of excuse or the slightest regard for our ease or comfort. It is true that we were in the States of the Pope, where the priest rules as absolute master, having possession at the same time of both heaven and earth, the keys of the other world and also of this, having power to damn us and to hang us, to slay our soul and our body. The knowledge of this enormous power, the greatest ever bestowed, gives to the priests of this country a security, an aplomb, a magisterial and sovereign ease of which one has no idea in the countries of the North.

Our two curés, since that was probably their grade in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, exchanged between themselves rare and mysterious words with that reserve and

prudence which never abandons the priest in the presence of the laity, or they slept or murmured the Latin of their breviary from volumes with brown covers and red edges, divided by markers. We do not believe that on the whole journey they happened to look out upon the landscape through the curtain; was it because they were so familiar with it, or did they fear the distractions of the outside world, the charm of that eternal Nature behind which hides himself the great Pan of antiquity, whom the Catholic Middle Ages were so obstinately determined to take for the devil?

This company, respectable assuredly, but the dull coldness of which froze us, quitted us at Ferrara. Those stolid features and black vestments made our coach somewhat resemble a hearse and we saw them depart with pleasure.

Ferrara rises solitary in the midst of a flat country more rich than picturesque. When one enters it by the broad street which leads to the square, the aspect of the city is imposing and monumental. A palace with a grand staircase occupies a corner of this vast square; it might be a court-house or a town hall, for people of all classes were entering and departing through its wide doors.

While we were wandering along the street, satisfying our curiosity at the expense of our appetite and robbing the hour accorded to our breakfast of forty minutes in order to regale our eyes and perform our duty as a traveler, a strange apparition suddenly stood before us, as unexpected as a phantom could be at midday. It was a sort of spectre masked in black, his head ingulfed in a black hood, his body draped with a frock, or rather a violet domino trimmed with red, having a red cross on his shoulder, a brass crucifix hanging from his neck, a red girdle, and waving silently a small wooden box, a portable trunk which gave forth a jingling of coin.

This scarecrow, who had nothing living about him but

his eyes, which could be seen to shine through the holes of his mask, shook his money-box two or three times in front of us, who were so startled that we let fall into it a handful of small coins, without knowing for what charitable work this lugubrious gatherer was begging. He went on his way without speaking a word, with a rattling of old iron and of small change, very sinister and very lugubrious, holding out his box into which every one was impelled to drop a small coin.

We asked to what order this phantom belonged, more terrifying than the monks and ascetics of Zurbaran, who so paraded the frightfulness of nocturnal visions in the pure light of the sun and made real in the street the nightmare of painful slumbers. We were informed that he was a penitent of the Brotherhood of Death, begging in order to buy coffins and to pay for the saying of masses for some poor devils who were to be shot this very day, brigands or republicans, we do not know which.

These penitents assume the sad and charitable mission of accompanying those condemned to death to the place of execution, supporting them in their last sufferings, raising from the scaffold the mutilated body, laying it in the coffin and procuring for it a Christian burial. They are people of the city who devote themselves to these painful tasks and so mingle a tender element, although veiled and masked, with the cold and implacable immolations of justice. These spectres hinder the culprit a little from seeing the executioner. It is the timid protest of Humanity. Often these Sisters of Charity of the scaffold are made ill and are more disturbed than the prisoner himself.

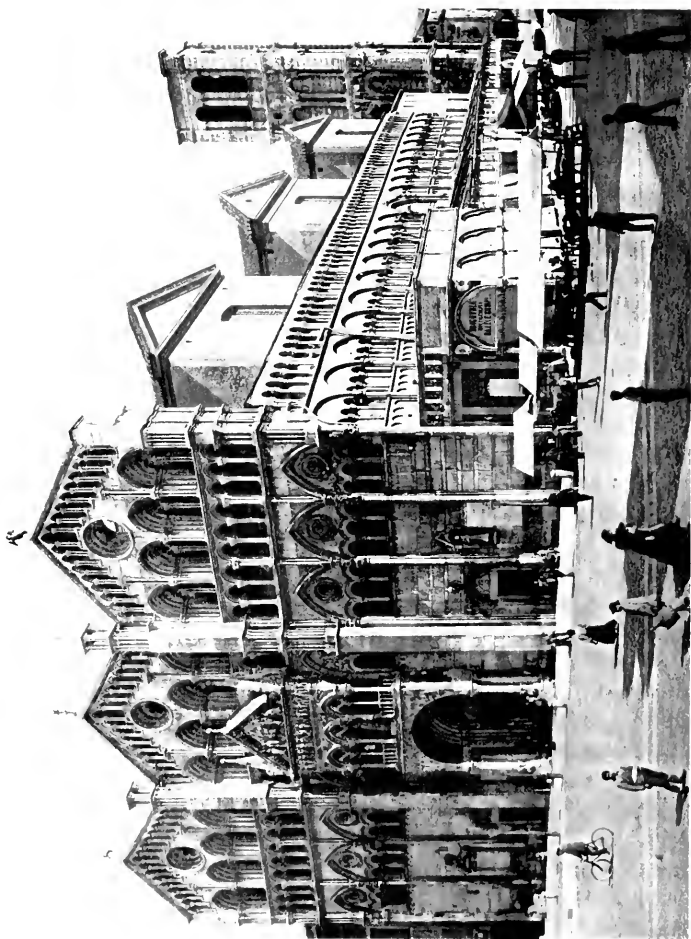
This is not the place to discuss the legitimacy of capital punishment. Voices more listened to than ours have developed with much eloquence the reasons for and against it; but since that horrible judicial tragedy

is maintained, it seems to us that the surroundings ought to be as terrifying as possible. It has nothing to do with the shuffling off the head from the culprit as nimbly as possible, an operation which in no way softens the punishment, but is concerned with affording a frightful example, to act on the imagination and restrain from crime. Every lugubrious spectacle which can augment the impression of this bloody drama and engrave it in bold silhouettes, at the base of the memory of the spectators, ought, in our opinion, to be set to work. It is necessary that physical terror combine itself with moral terror. Picture to yourselves those violet Claude Frollos holding in their hands lighted candles and marching in two files by the side of the livid prisoner condemned to death! What use is there in cutting off heads if nobody is frightened? If it is desired that it produce its intended effect, the taking away of the typical features of the thing should be avoided. The frankly terrible punishment is less hideous than the punishment most mildly commonplace deprived by mechanical contrivance and philanthropy of its affrighting poetry. But enough on this miserable subject; let us return to less sombre thoughts.

It was market-day, and that produced a little animation in this city ordinarily so dull. We saw nothing characteristic in the way of costume; uniformity pervaded everything. The peasants of the environs of Ferrara were quite like our peasants, save the southern brilliancy of their black eyes and a certain haughtiness of bearing which reminds one that he is in a classic land; the products of autumn, grapes, pumpkins, tomatoes, mingled with coarse earthenware and the utensils of a rural household, were heaped upon the Place, amidst groups of buyers and gossipers; ox-carts, much less primitive than those of Spain; asses with wooden pack-saddles awaiting with a melancholy patience until their masters should finish their business and return; oxen









## *FERRARA*

*The Cathedral. Twelfth and fifteenth centuries*

lying on their knees and ruminating peacefully, the asses plucking with the end of their gray lips a blade of grass springing from a fissure in the pavement.

A detail peculiar to Italy also is that of the money-changers in the open air. Their establishment is of the most simple character and consists of a stool and a small table on which are ranged piles of scudi, bajoques and other pieces of money. The money-changer, crouching like a dragon, watches his little treasure with an uneasy and yellow eye in which is depicted the incessant fear of thieves whom there are no bars to keep off.

Let us note another wholly Italian detail: A sonnet in praise of a physician who had cured him of a hepatic malady, was affixed by a convalescent full of gratitude to one of the most conspicuous walls of the Place. This sonnet, very flowery and very mythological, explained how the Parcae had wished to cut the thread of the days of the sick man, but how the Doctor, accompanied by Esculapius, the god of medicine, and by Hygeia, the goddess of health, had descended into the infernal regions in order to arrest the shears of Atropos and to replace the tow upon the distaffs of Clotho, tow which Lachesis spun afterward with a great deal of evenness. We like this antiquated and innocent manner of expressing gratitude.

The Cathedral, whose façade fronts upon this Place, is in the Italian Gothic style so inferior in our mind to the Gothic of the North. The porch presents some curious details. The columns, instead of resting on plinths like ordinary ones, rest on chimeras similar to those in the portal of St. Justin at Padua, which they half crush, and which seem to be revenging themselves for the pain thus caused by tearing Ninevite lions, which they hold prisoners between their claws. These monster caryatides writhe so frightfully under the enormous pressure that it makes one's eyes ache.

The castle of the ancient dukes of Ferrara, which is to be found a little farther on, has a fine feudal aspect. It is a vast collection of towers joined together by high walls crowned with a battlement forming a cornice, and which emerge from a great moat full of water, over which one enters by a protected bridge. The castle, built wholly of brick or of stones reddened by the sun, has a vermilion tint which deprives it of its imposing effect. It is too much like a decoration of a melodrama.

It was in this castle that the famous Lucretia Borgia lived, whom Victor Hugo has made such a monster for us, and whom Ariosto depicts as a model of chastity, grace and virtue; that blonde Lucretia who wrote letters breathing the purest love, and some of whose hair, fine as silk and shining as gold, Byron possessed.

It was there that the dramas of Tasso and Ariosto and Guarini were played; there that those brilliant orgies took place, mingled with poisonings and assassinations, which characterized that learned and artistic, refined and criminal, period of Italy.

It is the custom to pay a pious visit to the problematical dungeon in which Tasso, mad with love and grief, passed so many years, according to the poetic legend which grew up concerning his misfortune. We did not have time to spare and we regretted it very little. This dungeon, a perfectly correct sketch of which we have before our eyes, consists only of four walls, ceiled by a low arch. At the back is to be seen a window grated by heavy bars and a door with big bolts. It is quite unlikely that in this obscure hole, tapestried with cobwebs, Tasso could have worked and retouched his poem, composed sonnets, and occupied himself with small details of toilet, such as the quality of the velvet of his cap and the silk of his stockings, and with kitchen details, such as with what kind of sugar he ought to powder his salad, that which he had not being fine enough for his liking.

Neither did we see the house of Ariosto, another required pilgrimage. Not to speak of the little faith which one should place in these unauthenticated traditions, in these relics without character, we prefer to seek Ariosto in the *Orlando furioso*, and Tasso in the *Jerusalem délivrée*, or in the fine drama of Goethe.

The life of Ferrara is concentrated on the Plaza Nuova, in front of the church and in the neighborhood of the castle. Life has not yet abandoned this heart of the city; but in proportion as one moves away from it, it becomes more feeble, paralysis begins, death gains; silence, solitude, and grass invade the streets; one feels that one is wandering about a Thebes peopled with ghosts of the past and from which the living have evaporated like water which has dried up. There is nothing more sad than to see the corpse of a dead city slowly falling into dust in the sun and rain. One at least buries human bodies.

After a few mouthfuls swallowed hastily, we climbed into our carriage and resumed our journey toward Bologna. We stopped on the way at a vast inn with an arcade open to every wind that blows, in a place the name of which we do not recall, but which probably was Cento, where we partook of a modest repast, since we were anxious to reach Bologna before evening. Our memory recalls little of this piece of road except vast expanses of cultivation and trees, without the least thing to interest.

Perhaps the evening shades which inclined us to somnolence and only permitted the spark of our cigar to shine, robbed us of some beautiful view; but that is unlikely, from the configuration of the ground.

Bologna is a city with arcaded streets like the majority of the towns of this part of Italy. These porticos are convenient as shelters from the rain and sun; but they transform the streets into long cloisters, ab-

sorbing the light and giving to the towns a cold and monastic aspect. One can judge as to the gaiety of this system by referring to the *Rue de Rivoli* in Paris.

We alighted at a certain inn, where, by a touching pantomime, we obtained a supper in which Bologna sausage figured advantageously, since it satisfied the demand of local color.

After supper we sallied forth. A roguish fellow with a dull and greasy countenance, a bristling mustache, many trinkets, and a coat trimmed with gimp, recalling the type of Père Cavalcanti in the romance of Alexander Dumas, put himself at our heels and followed us, although we changed our direction every moment in order to get rid of him. Tired of this pursuit, and taking him for a rascal, we directed him somewhat roughly to choose another road ; but he declared that he would not leave us, it being his right and his business to act as guide to travelers. In that quality we belonged to him. We were robbers who were depriving him of his property, taking the bread out of his mouth and money out of his pocket. He had reckoned on us for the where-withal to regale himself with a flask of Piccolit or of Aleatico, to buy a ribbon for his wife and a ring for his mistress. We were wretched *canaille* so to upset his plans and spoil his domestic happiness. We were setting a bad example to future travelers and he was resolved not to recede an inch. He wished to conduct us to the stage-coach, the lamps of which were shining two paces before our eyes and to guide us to the *Rue des Galeries*, in which we were at that moment. We have never encountered a more obstinate scoundrel.

After swearing at him most energetically and strongly recommending him to go to the devil, he recommenced his offers, as though we had said nothing at all, pretending that we would surely lose our way and that he would not permit such a thing for the world.



We saw then that we must use strong measures. We retreated a few steps, and mentally invoking the memory of Lecour, our professor of fencing and boxing, we pretended to execute that beautiful flourish of our walking stick which Corporal Trim might have envied for the complication of its evolutions and which in terms of art is called the *rose couverte*.

When the scoundrel saw the stick about to descend like a flash of lightning and heard it whistle like an adder two or three inches from his nose and his ears, he retreated grumbling and saying that it was unnatural for decent travelers to refuse the services of an accomplished guide who had shown Bologna to the great satisfaction of the English.

Remorse for not having cracked his skull comes upon us sometimes in our sleepless nights; but perhaps we might have been arrested for this worthy action and made to pay for that pumpkin as though it had been a head. We ask pardon from travelers who have been wearied by him since, for not having assumed the responsibility. It is an oversight that we will remedy if ever we pass through Bologna again.

We had a letter of introduction to Rossini, who unfortunately was absent and not expected to return for several days. It is too bad not to know the features and the voice of a great contemporary genius, and when we are listening to "Semiramis," "The Barber of Seville," or "William Tell," it is painful for us only to be able to connect with the idea of Rossini the engraving by Scheffer and the statue in the office of the manager in the vestibule of the opera.

A puerile remark, perhaps, but one which we have already made in our travels, is that one can, from the number of barbers which a city contains, judge of the greater or less degree of its civilization.

In Paris there are very few; in London, none at all.

In that native land of razors everybody shaves himself. Without being willing to accuse the Romagna of *barbarism*, it is only just to say that nowhere have we seen so great a number of barbers as at Bologna; a single street contains more than a score of them in a very restricted space, and what is still more droll, the citizens of Bologna all wear beards. It is the country people who form the customers of these barbers, whom we found to have a very light touch, as we had them experiment upon our own skin, but they do not possess the dexterity of the Spaniards, the best barbers in the world since Figaro.

On leaving the barber shop we followed at hazard a street which brought us out suddenly on the square, where for many centuries have tottered without falling, the Towers of the Asinelli and the Garisenda, which had the honor of furnishing a simile for Dante. The great poet compares Antaeus bending toward the earth to Garisenda, which proves that the inclination of the Bolognese tower dates back as far as the thirteenth century.

These towers, seen by moonlight, had the most fantastic appearance in the world; the strange deviation, giving the lie to all the laws of statics and of perspective, causes vertigo and makes all the neighboring buildings appear to be out of plumb. The Tower of the Asinelli is three hundred feet high; its inclination is three feet and a half. This extreme elevation makes it appear slender, and we can only compare it to one of those immense factory chimneys of Manchester or Birmingham. It launches itself upward from a crenelated base and has two stories also crenelated, the second in retreat; from the belfry which surmounts it, descends an armor of iron binding it to the base of the edifice.

The Garisenda, which is scarcely half as high as the Tower of the Asinelli, leans frightfully and makes its

neighbor seem almost upright. Although it has leaned in this way for more than six hundred years, one does not like to find oneself on the side toward which it inclines. It seems to you that the moment of its fall has arrived and that it is about to crush you under its debris. It is a movement of infantile fright from which it is difficult for you to refrain.

A weird and grotesque idea which well depicts the extravagant effect of these towers, comes over you while looking at them, and we said to our traveling companion, "These are two monuments who have been drinking outside the walls, and who are returning drunk, leaning on each other's shoulders."

If the moonlight allowed the Towers of the Asinelli and Garisenda to be seen, it did not suffice to enable us to examine at the Museum the paintings of Guido, of the three Carrache, of Dominiquin, of Albane, and other great masters of the Bolognese school, and to our great regret we went to bed in one of those enormous Italian beds, in which the seven brothers of the little Tom Thumb, and the seven daughters of the Ogre stretched themselves out with their fathers and mothers; one can sleep in them in every possible way, at length and across the width and diagonally without ever falling into the space between the bed and the wall.

At four o'clock in the morning we dressed ourselves while still half asleep in order to catch the coach for Florence, and we noticed a movement of troops. It was an execution which was being prepared for. Every morning a score of people are shot for political reasons. We left Bologna under that painful impression which we had already experienced at Ferrara and which still awaits us at Rome; but the idea of crossing the Apennines on a beautiful September day very soon dispelled that lugubrious feeling.



## CHAPTER XXIX

### FLORENCE

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#### I.

THE Armida of the Adriatic had held us in its enchanted canals beyond the period of our expectations, and although no Chevalier Ubaldo had come to make us blush for our laziness in disclosing to our eyes the magic shield of diamonds, it became necessary to depart at last, and, after a brief stay at Padua, the gloominess of which seemed the more oppressive in comparison with the fairy city of Canaletto, we directed our steps as straight as possible toward Florence, the Athens of Italy.

We greatly regretted our inability in passing through Bologna to visit the Church of the Madonna of San-Luca, a singular edifice situated upon a mountain called *la Guardia*, and to which a corridor leads, formed on one side by a long wall of three miles in length, and on the other by six hundred and ninety arcades, framing a marvelous landscape.

This immense portico, erected by the piety of the Bolognese, scales the sides of the mountain by five hundred and fourteen steps, and conducts the curious and the devout from the city gates to the sanctuary, but in traveling, as in everything else, one must know how to make sacrifices; if one wishes to reach the end of his journey, a route must be chosen and followed, casting a glance of regret toward that which has escaped you. To wish to see everything is the way to see nothing. It is enough to see something.

The road from Bologna to Florence passes over the Apennines, that backbone of Italy—a backbone, in fact,

***FLORENCE***

*The Uffizi Porticoes (Vasari), with a view of the Palazzo*









of which each gaunt peak is a vertebra. Even for the traveler most accustomed to disappointments, there are certain names which exercise a magical influence. Apennine is one of these ; it has been seen in Horace and the ancient writers, how classic studies mingle with our first impressions and it is difficult not to have an idea of an Apennine already formed in one's mind, which the sight of the real one singularly contradicts and distorts.

The Apennine chain is composed of a succession of barren eminences, round, exhausted, excoriated, of rugged, scraggy hillocks, which resemble heaps of pebbles and gravel ; there are none of those gigantic rocks, those summits velvety with pines, those peaks bathed in clouds, silvered with snows, of those glaciers with thousands of scintillating crystals, of those cascades on which the rainbow plays, of those lakes, blue as the turquoise, where the chamois comes to drink, of those great circles of eagles soaring in the light, — nothing but a poverty-stricken nature, dull and sterile, and which seems all the more paltry and shabby after the Olympian majesty of the Swiss Alps and the romantic horrors of the Valley of Gondo, whose picturesqueness is so grand and terrible.

Certainly a mania for comparison is an indication of wrong-headedness, but we cannot help thinking of those beautiful Spanish sierras of which nobody speaks, and whose ignored beauty is far greater than that of Italian scenery, perhaps too much vaunted ; we recollect a trip which we made from Grenada to Velez-Malaga, across the mountains by a pass traversed probably by not more than two travelers in the course of a whole year, and which surpasses all that can be imagined in the shape of light, color, and form.

We thought also of our excursion in Kabyla, of those mountains gilded by the African sun, of those valleys

full of rose-laurels, of mimosas, of arbutus, of lentiscus, where trickled rivulets inhabited by little turtles, of those Kabylan villages surrounded by palisades of cactus and those horizons which the imposing silhouette of the Djurdjura always dominated, and veritably the Apennines appeared to us mediocre, in spite of their classic reputation.

We should not like to give ourselves over to that famous Marseillaise paradox which consists in saying, "In Africa, one freezes; in Russia, one broils." Nevertheless we must admit that we shivered with cold on our aerial journey, in spite of a putting on of cloaks and coats which would have excited the envy of Méry, the chilly poet. Never, in Paris, during the most rigorous winter, have we been clothed simultaneously with a like quantity of wearing apparel, and yet we were only in mid-September, a season which one is accustomed to think of as being warm and charming under the soft sky of Tuscany; it is true that the elevation freshened the air, and that the cold of warm countries is particularly disagreeable on account of the suddenness of the contrast.

It is not for the purpose of erecting a monument to the numbness of our fingers and the chattering of our teeth that we have inserted these remarks. It matters little to the universe whether we were warm or cold on the top of our stage-coach; but this observation may serve to prevent some innocent and confiding Parisian from setting out from Tortoni for Florence in the month of August in nankeen pantaloons and a linen coat, and of causing him to add to his baggage a tartan plaid, a cloak of pilot cloth and a comforter; we might also prevent some colds in the head or on the chest. The description of our sufferings there is not personal, it is wholly philanthropic.

The violence of the wind is so great on these bald

mountains, which receive alternately blasts which have been refrigerated by the Mediterranean and the Adriatic, that the Grand Duke has caused to be erected, at the culminating point of the route, a stone wall for the protection of travelers against those icy gales which blow across them and blow back again. Those who have seen the mistral at work on the platform of the Castle of the Popes at Avignon will understand the utility of such a wall. An inscription in hospitable style verifies this benevolent attention on the part of Leopold, an attention for which we thank him from the bottom of our heart.

At this point, one leaves the Romagna to enter Tuscany; another visit of the customs officers, an inconvenience of these states parcelled out in petty principalities. One passes one's life in opening and closing one's trunks, a monotonous occupation which ends in making the most phlegmatic become furious. Happily, we have adopted a system of philosophy which we have already developed apropos of the Romagnole customhouses. We show our key to whoever wishes to take it or leave it in the lock, and we go off to contemplate peacefully the landscape, a facility which the implacable stage-coach does not always permit. From this point of view it is perhaps regrettable that there are not more customhouses on the road.

When the slopes of the Apennines begin to incline toward Florence, the landscape commences to gain in beauty. Villas show themselves on the side of the road, cypresses erect their black spars, a more caressing, a warmer breeze, allows you to open your cloak; the olive risks its sorrowful foliage to the air without shivering; a movement of pedestrians, of horses and carriages makes perceptible the approach of a great living city — a rare thing in Italy, that ossuary of dead cities.

Night had fallen when we arrived at the San Gallo

gate. A very meager breakfast, although washed down with passable wine contained in big flasks of white glass covered with netting, swallowed at the Tuscan frontier, had filled us with a lively desire, in spite of our usual sobriety, for a Black Eagle, a Red Lion, a Golden Sun, or a cross of Malta — something to apply itself, as Rabelais says, “to the satisfaction of that which is under the nose,” which so much disturbed that good Panurge. Our eyes had made their four repasts, good or bad, but our stomach had only had one, and a very thin one at that!

Florence has her corset tied with a girdle of fortifications and makes trouble when one knocks at her door in the evening. We were compelled to wait a whole hour before the gate for we knew not what police formalities, then finally the wooden barrier was lifted, — a species of peaceful portcullis, which bars the arch, — and the carriage was allowed to roll over the cyclopean pavement of Florence.

For a city of festivals and of pleasure, the name of which sheds a perfume like a bouquet, Florence gave us a strange reception, and one which would have caused a more superstitious traveler to beat a retreat on account of its aspect of evil omen.

In the first street upon which the coach entered, we encountered an apparition as terrifying as that of the cart of the Cortès in the death feigned by the ingenious Knight of La Mancha in the environs of Toboso; only this was of a frightful reality.

Two files of masked black spectres, carrying torches of resin from which escaped floods of reddish light mingled with thick smoke, marched, or rather ran behind a catafalque borne on the shoulders, and which could be vaguely distinguished in the tawny glare of funereal light; one of them was ringing a bell and all were muttering under their masks, prayers for the dead with panting breath.

Occasionally another black spectre would issue from a house and join himself in haste to the sombre band, which presently disappeared in turning into a cross road. It was a Brotherhood of Black Penitents who, according to custom, were acting as escort to a funeral procession.

The Southern people, although they think less of death than the people of the North, because their thoughts are incessantly distracted by the voluptuousness of the climate, the spectacle of a beautiful Nature, the ardor of a warmer blood and stronger passions, love these processions of phantoms in dominos; for they are to be met with everywhere in Italy. They feel the need of giving everything a plastic form and of acting upon the imagination by spectacles. It is not a long time since they were accustomed to carry the dead to their last resting-places with their faces uncovered; the aspect of these immobile cadavers, livid under the paint which they used to conceal the fixed grimace of the last agony and the decomposition already setting in, added still more to the sinister and fantastic effect of these burials.

Weird custom! In England, the country of Young's Night Thoughts, the country in which the grave-diggers of Shakespeare play ball on the stage with the skull of Yorick, in the native land of the spleen and of suicide, the dead are buried surreptitiously, almost secretly, at hours when the streets are deserted and by unfrequented roads; in the course of four or five trips to London, we have not encountered a single funeral. One drops out of life there into nothingness without transition, and your useless remains are juggled away and concealed with the greatest agility. Catholicism arranges the scenery of death in a better fashion, and a strong faith in the immortality of the soul diminishes the terror of funeral ceremonies.

The *Hôtel de New York*, on the *Lung a l'Arno*, near

the bridge to Carraïa, had been recommended to us as quite comfortable. As a matter of fact, we found a big house kept in the English fashion, where one can eat in a civilized manner, something which had not happened to us for a long time. The travelers of other nations are not sufficiently grateful to the English, those great educators of hotel-keepers, those brave Islanders who transport their whole fatherland along with themselves, in boxes and compartments, and who, living in the most uncivilized countries just the same as they would in the City or the West End, have, by force of guineas, odd cries, and obstinate clucking, established all over the world the rump-steak, salmon cutlets, boiled vegetables, Indian curry, and the little pharmacies of vitriolic condiments, the cayenne pepper, the red capsicum of India, and the Harvey and anchovy sauce. Thanks to them, there is not a desert isle in the most unknown archipelago of Oceanica where there is not to be found, at any hour of the day or night, tea, sandwiches, and brandy, just as at the taverns around Greenwich.

Our meal finished, we wandered about the city for a while without a guide, according to our usual custom, and trusting to that instinct of locality which prevents us from getting lost, even in places which we know only by the map or a quick glance.

We ascended the *Lung-Arno* as far as the Bridge of the Trinity; we walked along a cross street and found ourselves in front of the Café Doni, the Tortonì of Florence. Carriages stop there on returning from the drive to the Cascines, the Champs Elysées of the place, and ices are brought out to the carriage.

Two big girls, a trifle sunburned but quite pretty, costumed with a sort of elegance, and wearing hats of Italian straw, which is so expensive in Paris, precipitated themselves upon us with a joyous boldness, their hands full of flowers, and quickly made a flower-garden

of our coat; each buttonhole, in the flash of an eye, and before we had a chance to prevent it, was decorated with a rose or a carnation. Never was a dandy more blooming with flowers.

The flower-girls, having seen a tenderfoot, if we may be pardoned the use of slang, had welcomed us after their fashion. Florence is the city of flowers; there is an enormous consumption of them there. In driving, the seats of the carriages are loaded with bouquets; they are made to rain into the carriages at every step, the houses are crowded with them, and one mounts stair-cases between two flowering hedge-rows.

It is said that in the spring the countryside is enameled with a thousand colors like a Persian carpet. It is a sight of which we can speak only from hearsay, for we were there in the fall.

While we were in the hands of these girls, we heard ourselves hailed by three or four friendly voices, just as if we had been in the Boulevard des Italiens.

The friend with whom we had made, in 1840, that beautiful and lengthy excursion in Spain, one of our most cherished memories, happened to be in Florence, where he was preparing the materials for his superb photographic publication, "Monumental Italy," and grasped us cordially by the hand across the excited group of flower-girls; Loubon, the Marseilles painter; Sturler, a German artist of the German school of Overbeck, whose picture representing the death of Suenon has doubtless not been forgotten, having been exhibited a few years ago at the Salon, and recalling by its execution the distemper painters, the tryptiques of the thirteenth century; G., the philologist, the erudite, the mysterious well of knowledge who amasses for himself alone a Benedictine erudition, saluted us gaily and offered us cigars and ices.

We were in a land of friends, and, elbow on table,

nose in a thick cloud of smoke, we began one of those conversations that can only be carried on among people who as artists, critics, philosophers, or poets have run through all the worlds of art. Whatever beauty there may be in a climate, however rich a country may be in palaces, in pictures, in statues, nothing can take the place of these vagabond conversations, full of ellipses and *sous-entends*, in which a single word may awaken a host of ideas, in which Truth sharpens itself upon a paradox, in which one touches upon everything without having the appearance of so doing, in which humor has unknown depths, and which are the despair of foreigners who listen to them, imagining that they understand French.

Each one described for us his plans for seeing Florence, some saying that a few days would suffice, others claiming on the contrary that more than a year was necessary in order to explore the rich treasures which that city contained, the cradle of Tuscan art. To this we replied that our time was limited, that we must visit Rome and Naples before the weather became too bad, and that we had no intention of preparing an erudite work, but simply of taking a few daguerreotype views of objects which appealed to us most strongly — views, monuments, works of art, costumes, and peculiarities — and that our talent did not extend beyond such work as that; while, in this talk of an hour's duration, plans had been outlined the accomplishment of which would demand our entire lifetime.

We returned to the *Hôtel de New York*, and as soon as it was daylight, we thrust our nose out of the window to study the perspective which unrolled itself before our eyes.

The Arno flowed between two quays of stone, turbid and yellow, covering scarcely half of its bed, which, slimy, covered with gravel, broken glass, and detritus



of every kind, was visible in spots. It merits the name of torrent much more than that of river; it flows in an intermittent fashion, according to the caprices of floods and droughts, now almost dry, and again overflowing, and at Florence resembles the Seine between the bridges of the Hotel Dieu and the Pont Neuf more than anything else.

Some fishermen, in the water up to their hips, were the only signs of animation upon the river, which, on account of the instability of its depth, can only carry flat scows, a matter which is all the more unfortunate because it is so near the sea, into which the Arno empties after passing through Pisa.

The house which fronted on the other quay was lofty and of a sober architecture. A few domes and a few towers of distant churches alone broke this horizontal line. We also perceived beyond the roofs of the buildings the little hill of San Miniato, with its church and its cypress trees, the name of which had remained imbedded in our memory, although we had never been in Florence, by the reading of the *Lorenzaccio* of Alfred de Musset, whose twenty-fifth chapter bears this title: "Before the Church of San Miniato at Montoliveto." Why did our memory retain this insignificant detail at the end of so many years, when we had forgotten so many more important matters? He who can answer this question can unravel the mysterious circumvolutions of poor human brains.

The beautiful Bridge of the Trinity with its three slender arches, by the architect Ammannato, spans on our right, the river Arno. It is adorned with statues of the four seasons, which from a distance produce quite a monumental effect.

We have, on our left, the Carraia Bridge, one of the oldest in Florence, since its construction dates back to the thirteenth century. Carried away by a flood, it was

rebuilt by Ammanato, the architect of the Bridge of the Trinity, of which we have just spoken.

To this bridge is attached a strange legend. In the month of May, 1304, an odd announcement spread through Florence gave the inhabitants to understand that "Those who desired to obtain news from the other world would only have to betake themselves to the Carraia Bridge." This singular invitation drew an enormous crowd to the bridge, the piers of which were of stone and the arches of wood.

The idea of hell summed up some years afterward in the great poem of Dante then occupied all minds, painters covered the walls of churches and of cloisters with diabolically fantastic compositions, which were summed up later by a supreme master in the "Last Judgment" of Michael Angelo.

It was therefore a representation of hell that was given upon the river according to the fantastic imaginations of the wild man of Buffamaleo. The Arno, loaded temporarily like Phlegeton, like Cocytus, was plowed by black barks in the style of Charon's boat, in which rode the ghosts welcomed with blows of pitch-forks by devils with horns, claws, wings, with a spiral tail, in the attitude made necessary by the occupation; a mixture of punishments, Christian and pagan, boiling cauldrons, gridirons, wheels, spikes, representing all varieties of torture, possible and impossible, with flame and smoke, Greek fire, and other artifices. The enormous mouths of Hell, after the fashion of the Middle Ages, opened and closed, permitting a view, through a reddish flame, of the crowd of the damned tormented by the devils.

This weird spectacle was given by the inhabitants of the burg of San Fanfrediano to the citizens of Florence, who paid dearly for it; for the bridge broke under the weight of the crowd, a large number of the spectators fell into the water and into the flames, drowning and

burning at the same time, and had, as the announcement promised, news direct from the other world, by going to seek it themselves.

We have been told that a catastrophe of this kind almost happened in Paris under the Empire, while some fireworks were being set off on the Pont Royal. At the moment when the first rockets went off, the crowd stationed on the Bridge of Arts all leaned toward the balustrade, and the flooring of the bridge tipped up; a quick leap back, executed with the agility of fear and by all together, reestablished the platform in its equilibrium, and the Parisians of 1810 fared better than the Florentines of 1304.

After this catastrophe the bridge was rebuilt wholly of stone and almost in the form in which it is seen to-day.

The general aspect of Florence, contrary to the usually received idea, is sad. The streets are narrow, the houses lofty, sombre in appearance; and have none of that bright Southern gaiety which one expects to find in them.

This city of pleasure, of which rich and elegant Europe makes a summer-house, has a disagreeably crabbed physiognomy. Its palaces resemble prisons or fortresses; each house has the air of intrenching itself or of defending itself against the street; the architecture, massive, solid, serious, has preserved all the distrust of the Middle Ages and seems always to expect some surprise from the Pazzi and the Strozzi.

Florence, then, which one pictures to himself as lying under an azure sky in a drapery of white buildings, and inhaling carelessly the fragrance of the red lily of its armorial bearings, is as a matter of fact an austere matron, half hidden in her black veils, like one of Michael Angelo's Fates.

## II.

The Greeks had a peculiar expression in order to render by a single word the central or important place of a city or a country, — *ophthalmos* (eye). Is it not, in truth, the eye which gives life, intelligence, and meaning to the human countenance, which expresses its thought and calms by its luminous magnetism?

If this idea is transferred from living nature to dead nature by a bold, but correct metaphor, is there not in each city a place which sums it up, at which life and movement meet, in which its historic memories are solidified under a monumental form in a way to produce a single, striking whole, an eye on the visage of the city?

Every great capital has its eye: at Rome it is the Campo Vaccino; at Paris, the Boulevard des Italiens; at Venice, the Place Saint Mark; at Madrid, the Prado; at London, the Strand; at Naples, the Via di Toledo. Rome is more Roman, Paris more Parisian, Venice more Venetian, Madrid more Spanish, London more English, Naples more Neapolitan, in that privileged locality than anywhere else. The eye of Florence is the Place of the Grand Duke — a beautiful eye. In fact, suppress that Place and Florence has no more meaning, — it might be another city. It is at that place, therefore, that every traveler ought to begin, and, moreover, had he not that intention, the tide of pedestrians would carry him and the streets themselves would conduct him thither.

The first aspect of the Place of the Grand Duke has an effect so charming, so picturesque, so complete, that you comprehend all at once into what an error the modern capitals like London, Paris, St. Petersburg, fall in forming, under the pretext of squares, in their compact masses, immense empty spaces upon which they

run aground all possible and impossible modes of decoration. One can touch with his finger the reason which makes of the Carrousel and Place de la Concorde, great empty fields which absorb fountains, statues, arches of triumph, obelisks, candelabra, and little gardens. All these embellishments, very pretty on paper, very agreeable also, without doubt, viewed from a balloon, are almost lost for the spectator who can not grasp the whole, his height only rising five feet above the ground.

A square, in order to produce a beautiful effect, ought not to be too big; it is also necessary that it should be bordered by varied monuments of diverse elevations. The Place of the Grand Duke at Florence unites all these conditions: bordered by monuments regular in themselves, but different one from another, it is pleasing to the eye without wearying by a cold symmetry.

The Palace of the Seigneurie, or Old Palace, which by its imposing mass and severe elegance at first attracts the attention, occupies a corner of the Place, instead of the middle. This idea, a happy one, in our opinion, regrettable for those who only see architectural beauty in geometrical regularity, is not fortuitous; it has a reason wholly Florentine. In order to obtain perfect symmetry, it would have been necessary to build upon the detested soil of the Ghibelline house, rebellious and proscribed by the Uberti; something that the Guelph faction, then all-powerful, were not willing to allow the architect, Arnolfo di Lapo, to do. Learned men contest the truth of this tradition; we will not discuss here the value of their objections. It is certain, however, that the Old Palace gains greatly by the singularity of this location and also leaves space for the great Fountain of Neptune and the equestrian statue of Cosmo First.

The name of fortress would be more appropriate than

any other, for the Old Palace; it is a great mass of stone, without columns, without *frontal*, without order of architecture. Time has gilded the walls with beautiful vermilion tints which the pure blue of the sky sets off marvelously, and the whole structure has that haughty and romantic aspect which accords well with the idea that one forms for oneself of that old Palace of the Seigneurie, the witness, since the date of its erection in the thirteenth century, of so many intrigues, tumults, violent acts, and crimes. The battlements of the palace, cut square, show that it was built to that height by the Guelph faction; the trifurcated battlements of the belfry indicate a sudden change on the accession to power of the Ghibelline faction. Guelphs and Ghibellines detested each other so violently that they expressed their opinions in their garments, in the cut of their hair, in their arms, in their manner of fortifying themselves. They feared nothing so much as to be captured by one another and differed as much as they possibly could. They had a special salutation after the manner of the Freemasons and the Companions of Duty. The opinions of the ancient owners of the Old Palace at Florence can be recognized by this characteristic: the walls of the city are crenelated squarely in the Guelph fashion, and the tower on the ramparts has the Ghibelline battlement of swallow-tail shape.

The Vecchio Palace has for its basement several steps which were used in former times as a species of tribune, from the top of which the magistrates and demagogues harangued the people. Two colossal statues of marble — Hercules slaying Cacus, by Bandinelli, and David the Conqueror of Goliath, by Michael Angelo, — mount near the door their age-long sentry-watch, like two gigantic sentinels whom someone has forgotten to relieve.

The Hercules of Bandinelli and the David of Michael

Angelo have been the objects of both criticism and praise which do not appear to me very just. In our opinion Bandinelli has been too much depreciated and Michael Angelo too much praised. There is in this Hercules slaying Cacus a lofty spiritedness, a fierce energy, a grandeur of sentiment, which denote an artist of the first rank. Never has Florentine hyperbole pushed farther anatomical exaggeration; the bent neck of Cacus and the interlacing of the muscles which bear up his monstrous shoulders display an astonishing force and power, and Michael Angelo himself when he saw this piece moulded separately could not help according it his approbation. The torso of Hercules was greatly criticised by the artists and the public of the period. This Bacchio Bandinelli had a most amusing controversy in the presence of the Grand Duke with that great braggart, Benvenuto Cellini, the bully of art. "Make thyself ready for another world, for I will drive thee from this world," said Benvenuto to Bandinelli, sitting on his haunches like a Don Spavento of Comedy. "Let me know a day in advance, that I may make my confession and my will, for I do not wish to die as a brute like thee," replied the sculptor. This dialogue, alternating between billingsgate and scientific criticism, greatly diverted the Grand Duke. These animosities were really of more value to art than the hypocritical sycophancies indulged in by modern artists between themselves. Passion is a good thing and proves a sincere belief; moreover Benvenuto Cellini does justice to the talent of Bandinelli in his Memoirs, in which he accords him an honorable place among contemporaneous celebrities.

The David of Michael Angelo, besides the inconvenience there is in representing under a gigantic form a Biblical hero of notoriously small size, seemed to us a trifle common and heavy, a rare defect with this master;

his David is a great big boy, fleshy, broad-backed, with monstrous biceps, a market porter waiting to put a sack upon his back. The working of the marble is remarkable and, after all, is a fine piece of study which would do honor to any other sculptor except Michael Angelo; but there is lacking that Olympian mastership which characterizes the works of that superhuman sculptor.

Two other statues, one by Bandinelli, the other by Vincenzo de Rossi, served in olden times as posts on which to hang the chain which barred the gate: that of Vincenzo represents a man terminating in the trunk of an oak intended to symbolize the power and magnanimity of Tuscany; that of Bandinelli represents a woman, her head encircled by a crown, her feet caught in a laurel, symbolizing the supremacy in the arts and the courtesy of that happy land. Above the door two lions sustain a shield with this inscription:

Jesus Christus, Rex Florentini Populi.  
S. P. Decreto Electus.

Jesus Christ was, in fact, elected King of Florence, on the proposition of Nicolo Capponi to the Council of the Thousand, with the idea of assuring public tranquillity, Christ not being a King who could be replaced or supplanted by anyone. This ideal presidency, however, did not prevent the Republic from being overthrown.

The court into which this door leads was put in its present condition by Michelozzi. The style of the Renaissance blooms in the architecture. Elegant columns supporting arcades form a courtyard such as one finds in the centre of Spanish houses; a fountain erected according to drawings of Vasari by the sculptor Tadda, under the order of Cosmo I, occupies the middle of it and completes the resemblance. The basin is of porphyry; the water gushes from the snout of a fish being strangled by a beautiful child in bronze, by Andrea Verocchio. Above the arcades are painted in



frescos, trophies, spoils taken in war, armor and prisoners in chains, with medallions containing the armorial bearings of Florence and the Medici.

One of the most curious features of the Old Palace is the grand salon, a hall of enormous dimensions which has its legend. When the Medici were driven from Florence, in 1494, Fra Girolamo Savonarola, who directed the popular movement, proposed the idea of constructing an immense hall where a council of a thousand citizens would elect the magistrates and regulate the affairs of the Republic. The architect Cronaca had charge of this task and acquitted himself of it with a celerity so marvelous that Brother Savonarola caused the rumor to spread that angels descended from heaven to help the masons and continued at night the interrupted work. The invention of these angels tempering the mortar and carrying the hod is all done in the legendary style of the Middle Ages and would furnish a charming subject for a picture to some ingenuous painter of the school of Overbeck or of Hauser. In this rapid construction Cronaca displayed, if not all his genius, at least all his agility. The work has been justly admired and often consulted by architects.

When the Medici returned to power and transferred their residence from the Palace of the Via Larga which they had occupied to the Palace of the Seigneurie, Cosmo wished to change the Council Hall into an audience chamber, and charged the presumptuous Bacchio Bandinelli, whose designs had attracted him, with various alterations of an important character; but the sculptor had undoubtedly presumed too much on his talent as an architect, and in spite of the assistance of Giuliano Baccio d'Agnolo, whom he called to his aid, he worked for ten years without being able to conquer the difficulties which he had created for himself. It was Vasari who raised the ceiling several feet, finished the

work and decorated the walls with a succession of frescos which may still be seen and which represent different episodes in the history of Florence, combats, and captures of cities, the whole being a travesty of antiquity, an intermingling of allegories. These frescos, painted with an intrepid and learned mediocrity, display the commonplace tones, swelling muscles and anatomical tricks in use at that epoch among artists.

Although it deals with the history of Florence, one would think he was beholding the Romans of ancient Rome laying siege to Veia or some other primitive city of Latium, and these frescos have the appearance of gigantic illustrations of the *De Viris illustribus*. This false taste is shocking. What right have the classic helmet and the cuirass with thongs, and men altogether nude in a war of Florence against Pisa and Sienna?

A great number of statues and groups in niches or on pedestals decorate this hall. We will not describe them singly, as we should never finish; but we will mention the "Adam and Eve" of Baccio Bandinelli, one of the best pieces of that master, the "Jean de Medicis" and the "Alexander," first Duke of Florence, slain by that Lorenzaccio who has furnished to our poet Alfred de Musset a wholly Shakesperian study, the "Vice Triumphant Over Virtue," by Jean of Bologna, and especially a "Victory" by Michael Angelo, destined for the mausoleum of Julius II., of a loftiness so sublime that it seems to make all the other features flat, ugly, common, trivial, almost abject, however beautiful they might be elsewhere. The "Alexander" and the "Jean de Medicis," in spite of their fierce and imperious air, look like little boys in the presence of that terrible and triumphant statue. It was the custom for Michael Angelo to cause to disappear and to reduce to nothingness all works of art which hazarded themselves alongside of his creations.

We have already called attention to the fact that colossal dimensions are not at all necessary to produce effect in architecture. The Loggia de Lanzi, that gem of the Place of the Grand Duke, consists of a portico composed of four arcades, three on the façade, one in return on the gallery of the offices. It is a miniature of a monument; but the harmony of its proportions is so perfect that the eye in contemplating it experiences a sense of satisfaction. The nearness of the Palace of the Seigneurie, with its compact mass, admirably sets off the elegant slenderness of its arches and columns. In spite of the opinion of Michael Angelo, who replied to the Grand Duke, who consulted him upon the subject, that the best thing to do in order to decorate the Place would be to continue the portico of Orcagna, or Orgagna, — for such is the Italian orthography of the name— we believe that the Loggia is best as it is and that it would gain nothing by being repeated like the arcades of the Rue de Rivoli. Its principal charm is that, symmetrical in itself, it observes the law of intersequence among the monuments which accompany it and which it interrupts; this diversity gives to the Place a gaiety, to which ennui would have soon succeeded if the arcades had been repeated upon all the sides.

Orgagna, like Giotto, like Michael Angelo, like Leonardo da Vinci, like Raphael and all the panoramic capacities of those happy days when commonplace envy did not restrict genius to a narrow specialty, ran over with an equal step the triple race-course of Art; he was architect, painter and sculptor: the Loggia, the frescos of the Campo-Santo, the statue of the Virgin, and different tombs in the churches of Florence, show how superior he was in each of these rôles. He also had an innocent and legitimate pride in placing at the bottom of his paintings, “*Orgagna, sculptor*,” and at the bottom of his sculptures, “*pictor*.”

The columns of the Loggia have capitals of a fanciful Gothic-Corinthian style in which the regularities of Vitruvius are not observed; a fact which does not detract in any way from their charm.

The name Loggia dei Lanzi comes from an old barracks of lansquenets, or foot-soldiers, which formerly existed not far from there, when the foundations were laid under the tyrannical rule of the Duke of Athens. The object of these buildings was to shelter the citizens from sudden showers and to permit them to transact their business or that of the State under cover. It was under this gallery, raised a few feet from the level of the Place, that the magistrates were invested with their powers, that knights were created, the decrees of government published and the people harangued from a raised platform.

Public spirit would do well to secure the erection in our rainy Northern cities, where the passersby are twenty times a day exposed to the rough inclemency of the weather, of monuments like the Loggia dei Lanzi of Florence, the Lonja de Seda of Valencia, the Forum Boarium or the Græcastasis of Rome; besides the pedestrians, these porticos might shelter, like that of Orgagna, masterpieces of ancient or modern sculpture, and afford occupation for sculptors as well as architects.

The Loggia is a species of Museum in the open air. The "Perseus" of Benvenuto Cellini, the "Judith" of Donatello, the "Rape of the Sabines" of John of Bologna, are framed in the arcades. Six antique statues—the cardinal and monastic virtues—by Jacques, called Pietro, a Madonna by Orgagna adorn the interior wall. Two lions, one antique, the other modern, by Flaminio Vacca, almost as good as the Greek lions of the arsenal at Venice, complete the decoration.

The Perseus may be regarded as the masterpiece of Benvenuto Cellini, that artist so highly spoken of in

France, without scarcely anything being known about him. This statue, a little affected in its pose, like all the works of the Florentine school, has a juvenile grace which is very attractive. The young hero is about to cut off the head of the unfortunate Medusa, whose body with its members convulsed with agony, makes a stool for the foot of the conqueror. Perseus, turning away his face, on which compassion is mingled with horror, holds his sword in one hand, and with the other lifts the petrifying head, immobile and dead in the midst of its hair of twisting serpents. The pedestal, another masterpiece, is adorned with bas-reliefs relating to the history of Andromeda, small figures and foliage, in which reappears the talent of Benvenuto, sculptor. Beneath one of these figures, representing a Jupiter standing erect and brandishing his thunderbolts, this threatening inscription may be read "Te, fili, si quis læserit, ultor ero," which applies equally well to Perseus as to the artist. This legend of double meaning seems to be a warning of the sculptor bully to the critic. Without permitting ourselves to be influenced by this rhodomontade, we shall freely praise the Perseus for its heroic charm and the beauty of its delicate forms. It is a charming statue, a delicious jewel; it is worth all the trouble it cost.

The Judith of Donatello, at the Palace of the Seignurie, shows the decapitated head of Holophernes with a rather shocking boldness and occupies under the arcade of the Loggia the same situation as the Spartacus of Foyatier on the front of the Palace of the Tuileries. Only, the protest of Spartacus is mute, and while that of Judith offers no sort of ambiguity there has been cut on the plinth this slightly reassuring inscription: "Exemplum salut publ. cives posuere MCCCCXV."

Both these statues are of bronze. Benvenuto, in his Memoirs recounts in a dramatic and touching fashion

all the calamities connected with the casting of the Perseus and the terrible anguish he experienced up to the moment success came to crown his work. In order to liquify the metal which had hardened in the crucible and would not run, the artist threw in all his plate, heated the fire with his furniture, and, worn out, panting, devoured by fever and anxiety, thinking of the joy of his rivals if the operation failed, stood ready to hurl himself into the furnace if the mould cracked under the pressure of the bronze. But what joy, what triumph, what a happy banquet with his pupils and companions when the work issued forth radiant and pure after all those anxieties! The house is still pointed out at Florence in which the Perseus was cast.

The "Rape of the Sabines" was an admirable pretext for Jean of Bologna to display his knowledge of the nude and to exhibit the beauty of the human form under three different expressions: a beautiful young woman, a vigorous young man, and a stately old man. This beautiful group of marble recalls the "Boreas Carrying off Orythie," of the Garden of the Tuileries; there is the same elegance, the same ingenious facility of arrangement.

But we have had enough of descriptions of palaces and of statuary. Let us take a carriage and make our way to the *Cuscines*, the Champs Elysées of Florence, that we may gaze upon some human faces and rest ourselves from marble, stone, and bronze.

### III.

The Florentine type is essentially different from the Lombard and Venetian types. You no longer see those pure and regular lines, that oval a trifle heavy, that happy serenity of form, that perfect health of the beautiful, which strikes you in the streets of Milan, where, as Balzac so well says, the daughters of the porter have

the air of daughters of the queen. One would not understand at Florence that superb pagan epitaph of an unknown person whose tomb bears as its only inscription: "*Fu bello e Milanese*"; the voluptuous grace and *spirituelle* gaiety of Venice are absent here.

The features at Florence have not the antique character which still exists in the remainder of Italy after the slipping away of so many centuries, after successive invasions, so radical a change in customs and religion, they are visibly more modern. If a Neapolitan or a Roman of pure race could not be mistaken on the Boulevard Gand, a Florentine might pass unnoticed among Parisians; that distinct Southern stamp by which other Italians are recognized, will not betray him. There is more of the capricious, more of the unexpected in the lineaments of the men and women of Florence; thought, moral preoccupations, leave on their faces appreciable furrows and produce an irregularity by which the expression gains.

The women of Florence, less beautiful than the Milanese, the Venetians, or the Romans, are more interesting and have more ideas. They would especially delight the psychological writer. Their eyes are veiled with melancholy, their countenances at times are dreamy, and some have that air of vague suffering, an altogether modern and Christian expression, which would be sought for in vain in Greek or Roman statuary. Among classic Italian heads, the heads of the Florentines are bourgeois in the inner and favorable sense of the word. They express not only the race, but the individual; they are not exclusively human, they are also social.

The Florentine artists, Andrea del Sarto for example, have not that serene beauty of Titian, that angelic placidity of Raphael; they reproduce a type at once more humble and more sought after. Reality is felt

through their ideal; they do not give to their features that mask of general regularity which the other great Italian masters sometimes abuse. They risk the portrait oftener in their compositions and are not afraid to sketch a certain amount of ugliness in order to attain to character. Upon seeing their works one can comprehend how some of their heads, certainly less beautiful than the types of the painters of Venice or of Rome, can still produce an impression more penetrating and more durable.

These generalities — which permit of numerous exceptions, since there are regular Florentine heads — are the result of observations made in the streets, in the churches, in the theatres, on the promenades; is not the human face as worthy of attention as architecture? Is not the model worth as much as the picture, the work of God as valuable as the work of art?

The most favorable locality in Venice for this sort of study, too often neglected by tourists enamored of antiquities or of art, is undoubtedly the drive of the *Cascines*, a species of Tuscan Champs Elysées and Hyde Park, into which from three to five o'clock in the afternoon pour in tilburys, phaetons, coupés, landaus, American surreys, and even in cabs, all that the city contains of the wealthy, the noble, elegant, and even the pretentious. On the Florentine background are brilliant outlines — foreign eccentricities easy to recognize.

The *Cascines*, the name signifying dairies, are situated outside the walls, beyond the de Frato gate, and extend along the right bank of the Arno for a distance of nearly two miles to the point where the Terzolle empties into the river.

Through masses of grand old trees such as parasol-pine, evergreen, oaks, chestnuts and other Southern varieties mingled with those of Northern origin, are outlined the sandy roads which meet at a centre, forming what



***FLORENCE***

*Promenade of the “ Cascine,” King’s Square*







the Spaniards would call the salon of this fashionable driveway.

These great masses of verdure, bordered on one side by the gentle river Arno, and on the other by the blue vista of the Apennines, the distant slopes of which may be seen dotted with white villas and hamlets, form under the beautiful Southern light, a picture as a whole which it is hard to forget. The *Cascines* have something more naïvely rural about them than the equivalent drives of Paris and London, and the gathering of foreign elegance does not detract from that Italian good nature so gracious in its freedom from care. A country-house of the Grand Duke, very simple and very commonplace, is buried in the midst of this fresh verdure, which the people of the South appreciate better than we do, doubtless on account of its rarity. We found in Spain the same admiration for the shady places of the park of Aranjuez, which is watered by the Tagus, and which is filled with trees from the North.

Florence, a few years ago, especially before political events had scared away the wealthy tourists, was like the salon of Europe; there was to be met with "all that gilded world of the season of the baths."

It was there that betook themselves from all the points of the compass, English fleeing from their native fogs, Russians shaking off the snows of their six months' winter, Frenchmen accomplishing the fashionable tour, Germans seeking the naïve in art, singers and danseuses retired from the theatre and its problematical fortunes, dethroned queens, pretty couples united at Gretna-Green or still more simply before the altar of nature, women separated from their husbands for one reason or another, great ladies having had a stroke, princesses dragging in their train famous tenors or young men with black beards, dandies half-ruined by Baden or Spa, victims of lansquenets and Parisian credit, old maids seeking an ad-

venture, a whole world of interlopers mixed with a good deal of alloy, and lively, *spirituelle*, joyous, looking only for pleasure, and spending money with all the more carelessness in that Italian luxuries are relatively inexpensive.

All this society frequented the hospitable balls of the Grand Duke and amused itself greatly. That sort of general tolerance which caused every individual to be received who bore himself well, and had some sort of a letter of introduction, often permitted the sharper and adventurer to enter this cosmopolitan salon; but one was not obliged to recognize them in London or Paris, and the freedom of a masked ball was fully enjoyed in the city. Intrigues and amours ran their course without much scandal; everyone was too busy to have time to speak evil. Moreover, to accuse a woman of having a lover seemed childish; scandal only began with two and calumny with three.

The drive to the *Cascines* was one of the important episodes of the day. A sort of Lovers' Exchange was held there, in which the actions of the women were quoted as follows: "Madame de B. is going up; Madame de V. is falling; Madame de B. has left the Baron L. for Prince D.; Madame de V. has been betrayed by a minor cantatrice of the Pergola; it is serious!" Toilettes were criticized and analyzed, more negligently, however, than elsewhere, for pleasure was the great business; but the daughters of Eve always think a little about the cut of the fig leaf which envelops their charms — and this is due doubtless to the virtue of the climate, — there are to be seen at the *Cascines* Parisian women sufficiently in love to be no longer vain and to look only at their lover.

This movement of foreigners has moderated somewhat, still the *Cascines* afford, from three to seven o'clock, according to the season, a spectacle of the most joyous animation.

When we arrived there in an open carriage, since it would be in bad taste to go on foot, although the distance of the *Cascines* from the city is very slight, the Assembly was at its height. It was a fine day, the air was balmy, and the sun slipped some joyous rays between the light fleecy clouds.

The central point of the *Cascines* represented an enormous salon, in which the arrested vehicles figured as couches and footstools. The women, in grand toilette, turned around upon the seat of their carriage, the front of which was loaded with flowers, with all sorts of studied poses in order to set off their good points, and with the graces of Celimene that would be the envy of the Theatre Français.

Lovers on foot, attentive and simple gallants, came to pay visits to the carriage of their choice, as one goes to call upon a woman in an opera-box, and conversed standing on the carriage-step.

It is there that arrangements are made for the evening, expedients thought out, meetings planned without a great deal of precaution or mystery, for we found scarcely any trace of that ferocious Italian jealousy, so celebrated in melodramas and romances.

The riders also mingle in the conversation from the top of their prancing steeds, which they continue to excite in order to make them execute curvettes, feats without any danger which always make a little of a hero of you in the eyes of the beloved woman.

All this time bouquet-sellers run from one carriage to another or assail the horsemen and pedestrians with their baskets which are emptied as soon as filled. They carry out to the letter the recommendation of Virgil "*Manibus date lilia plenis.*" They have even the appearance of giving them away, though in reality they sell them. They are not paid for on the spot, but the recipients from time to time make them a present of a little money

or something else, which is more agreeable for the vendors, these flower-sellers being ordinarily young and pretty girls, fresh flowers and pretty girls being drawn together by a natural harmony of things.

We will sketch, keeping the name secret, some of the more remarkable individualities. A Russian princess (all Russian women are princesses), enthroned in a superb open carriage dressed in violet velvet, and surrounded by many admirers. White as her country's snows, her eyelids browned with khool, with red lips, her face framed in wavy hair of a light chestnut which was almost auburn under the gloss of essences, crowned by a thick net which made it almost like a diadem under the aureole of her lace hat, she recalled by a certain Oriental and Circassian air, the famous Odalesque of Ingres, popularized by the lithographs of Sudre.

The great Russian ladies have in their elegance something of the barbarian, and in their pose an imperious calm, a nonchalance full of serenity, which comes to them from the habit of ruling their serfs, and gives them a distinct physiognomy, very easily recognizable under the English or French veneer with which they try to cover themselves. This one would have had the appearance of a Greek Panagia, if, in place of the green trees of the *Cascines*, upon which her immobile head stood out, there had been placed behind her the background of figured gold of a tryptich. Her small and narrow hand, without a glove, loaded with enormous rings, scintillated on the rim of the carriage like a relic adorned with precious stones which is extended for the faithful to kiss.

In a corner of the carriage, piteously kept in the background, sat a friend or companion of neutral face and dress, the resigned shadow of this brilliant picture. In olden times, the blonde Venetian ladies caused themselves to be followed by a negro. It was more



human and of better effect, from the point of view of coloring.

In an English carriage, drawn by English horses, harnessed with English harness, sat an Englishwoman surrounded by an English atmosphere brought from Hyde Park by some process of which we are ignorant. The *Cascines* disappeared from before our eyes, the bluish perspective of the Apennines vanished in a sudden mist, and the Serpentine river replaced the Arno. A brusque rebound hurled us from Florence to London, and we felt under our thin coat a sharp blast of Northern wind. We sought mechanically on the cushions of our carriage for an absent rug, and yet that woman was beautiful with the beauty of a prosperous Englishwoman. Never did whiter swan polish its neck of snow on the lake of Virginia water in the fairy-like engravings of a keepsake; she was one of those ideally ethereally graceful creatures, a trifle tall, as Lawrence paints them, as Westall draws them; a slim and flexible neck; golden hair falling in languid ringlets about a face kneaded with cold cream and rouge; lashes shining like silken threads over eyes of a vague azure. In gazing at this transparent shadow, who probably could digest a rump-steak powdered with cayenne pepper and washed down with sherry, one could not help thinking of Cymbeline, of Perdita, of Cordelia, of Miranda, of all the poetic heroines of Shakespeare.

Two adorable babies, a little boy, spirited and dreamy like the portrait of young Lambton; a little girl, undoubtedly escaped from one of Reynolds's frames, in which the children of Lady Londonderry are represented with wings like cherubim on a ground of blue sky, occupied the front seat of the carriage and played gravely with the ears of a King Charles of as pure a breed as that which Van Dyck has placed in his portrait of Henrietta of England.

A cavalier, stiff as a ramrod, irreproachably dressed, a gentleman, mounted on a blooded sorrel horse which glistened like satin, reins gathered together in his hand, the pommel of his stick between his lip, kept near the carriage with the most bored and splenetic air in the world; he seemed to await the young woman with an indulgent inattentiveness.

Not far away, talking with a Sicilian princee, was another Englishwoman of a wholly different type, almost Italianized, and gilded by the warm sun of Florence; an intelligent, fine face, a beautiful forehead under black hair, a slim waist, fitted to wear the gown of a woman or the vest of an Amazon; a sort of delicate Clorinda, a doubtful angel, of the kind that Mlle. de Faveau loves to make display their wings above some holy-water bowl of the Middle Ages.

A hand of a queen, a magnificent arm which moulding has made famous, caused us to recognize on the seat of another carriage, one of our old Parisian friends who preserves at Florence, in spite of a long exile, all the spirit and all the charms which made her Wednesdays sought after in the *Rue de Mont Blanc*; we went to greet her, happy in finding a friendly face among these unknown beauties, and questions vying with each other leaped to our lips, hers concerning Paris, mine of Florence.

Apropos of Florence, we notice that in this gallery of portraits we have not put any Florentines. This is for the reason that there were very few Florentines there, and their features, the general type of which we have essayed to sketch, have not that sort of theatrical beauty which makes them admired from a distance. We will only remark that they wear their waists very long and clasped by long corsets of a peculiar make, which very closely resemble the old French bodice, which impresses on their movements a certain restrained stiffness, con-

trary to the Italian freedom. Some wear their hair parted on the side like men. Is it a local coquetry, or the need of resting their hair fatigued by the comb? We do not know how to decide. This oddity is disturbing at first, without one being able to say why, and it changes greatly the expression of the countenance. But it is the custom and one ends by finding a certain charm about it.

To repair this omission we will sketch the beautiful head of Signora —, a pure-blooded Florentine, who is pointed out to us at the centre of the *Cascines*, surrounded by a court of admirers. Her great, tranquil eyes almost fixed, her pure and regular features, her mouth clean-cut, the strong and correct lines of her neck, recall that Lucrezia del Fede so much beloved by Andrea del Sarto, and those beautiful portraits of Bronzino, which cannot be forgotten when once seen, and which sum up the Florentine type under its more noble aspect. Why is it necessary that these great artists should lie sleeping under the tomb! They could have left to the world an immortal image.

We were in the course of engraving this pure image in our memory when we saw all heads turning to the same side. This sudden movement was produced by the appearance on the scene of the young Count —, who came out from the Grand Alley, driving, with an incomparable grace and precision, a phaeton drawn by two wonderful little black horses, of much elegance, and of extraordinary nimbleness and docility. This charming equipage described a circle on the sand of the rond-point which a compass could not have made more exact, and the Count, throwing the reins to his groom, leaped lightly to the ground, and went to pay his respects to the beautiful Florentine whose features we have just sketched.

He was a young Hungarian of twenty-two or twenty-three years of age, of wonderful beauty, so supple, so

unconstrained and *svelte*, so virile in his feminine gracefulness, that the more robust would have lowered their arms before him. He possessed the most marvellous national costumes; braided jackets, vests stiff with embroideries of gold; morocco boots strewn with pearls, caps constellated with diamonds and surmounted by aigrettes of heron-feathers that he wore with a charming complacency in the evening in order to satisfy feminine curiosity and doubtless, a little, his own coquetry; an entirely allowable coquetry, for the Hungarian costume, in spite of its profusion of ornaments, is of a heroic and martial elegance which is far removed from all idea of ridiculous dandyism. The women, vanquished, avowed with pleasure that they were ugly alongside this handsome Hungarian, and that their richest ball toilettes were only rags compared with his splendid glistening vestments of gold and precious stones.

A mysterious apparition also greatly puzzled, at this period, the cosmopolitan curiosity of Florence. A woman alone, and of the most lofty air, had appeared at the *Cascines*, seated in a brown caleche, draped with a big shawl of white *crêpe de chine*, the fringes of which came almost to her feet, her head decked with a Parisian hat which bore the ear-marks of Madame Royer in big letters, and which made a bright aureole around her pure and fine profile, clear-cut as an antique cameo, and contrasting by its Greek type with that wholly modern elegance and that bearing almost English in its distinction. Her bluish neck, so white was it, the rose of her cheek, her eye of a clear azure seemed to designate her as a beauty of the North; but the sparkle of that sapphire eye was so vivid that it seemed as though it must have been lighted by some Southern sky; her hair had those brownish tones and that vivacious force which characterise the blondes of warm countries; one of her arms was buried in the folds of her shawl, like that of Mne-

mosyne, while the other, clasped by a bracelet, issued forth half bare from the flood of lace of her sleeve, and was tapping against her cheek from the end of a little gloved hand a camelia of a deep crimson, with a gesture of dreamy absentmindedness evidently habitual. Was she English, Italian, or French? That is what no one could discover, for no one knew her. She made the tour of the *Cascines*, stopped an instant at the rond-point, seeming to be neither surprised nor interested by a spectacle which it seemed should be new to her, and took her way back to the city.

The next day she was looked for in vain ; she did not reappear. What was the secret of that single drive? Did the unknown come to some mysterious rendezvous agreed upon from one end of Europe to the other? Did she wish to assure herself of the presence of some rival with a faithless one? It has never been ascertained. But this fleeting vision has not yet been forgotten at Florence.





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